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US 20030027616 A1

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INT CL⁷ G07F 17/32 17/34

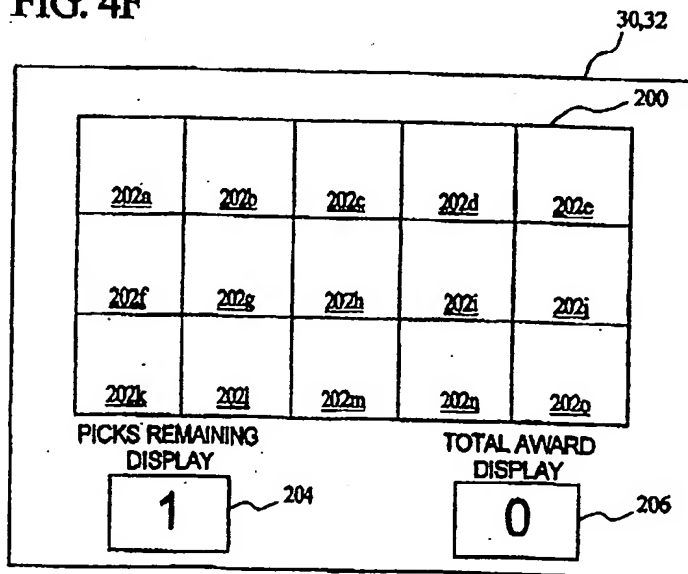
Other: Online: WPI, JAPIO AND EPODOC

(54) Abstract Title

Pick reduction gambling machine

(57) A reel type gambling machine comprises an additional bonus game. The bonus game is presented on a supplementary display 30 which shows a number of selection elements 202a-202o, picks remaining 204 and total awards 206. The selection elements may be in the form of single rows, a matrix or a random distribution. Upon graduation to the bonus game a player picks from the first selection elements and the number of picks are reduced until the player picks a trigger selection. When triggered the display shows a number of second selections, each of which is associated with an award, and the player picks the second selections until there are no picks remaining. The selections may be made via a touch screen 200 or mechanical doors (not shown).

FIG. 4F



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FIG. 1A

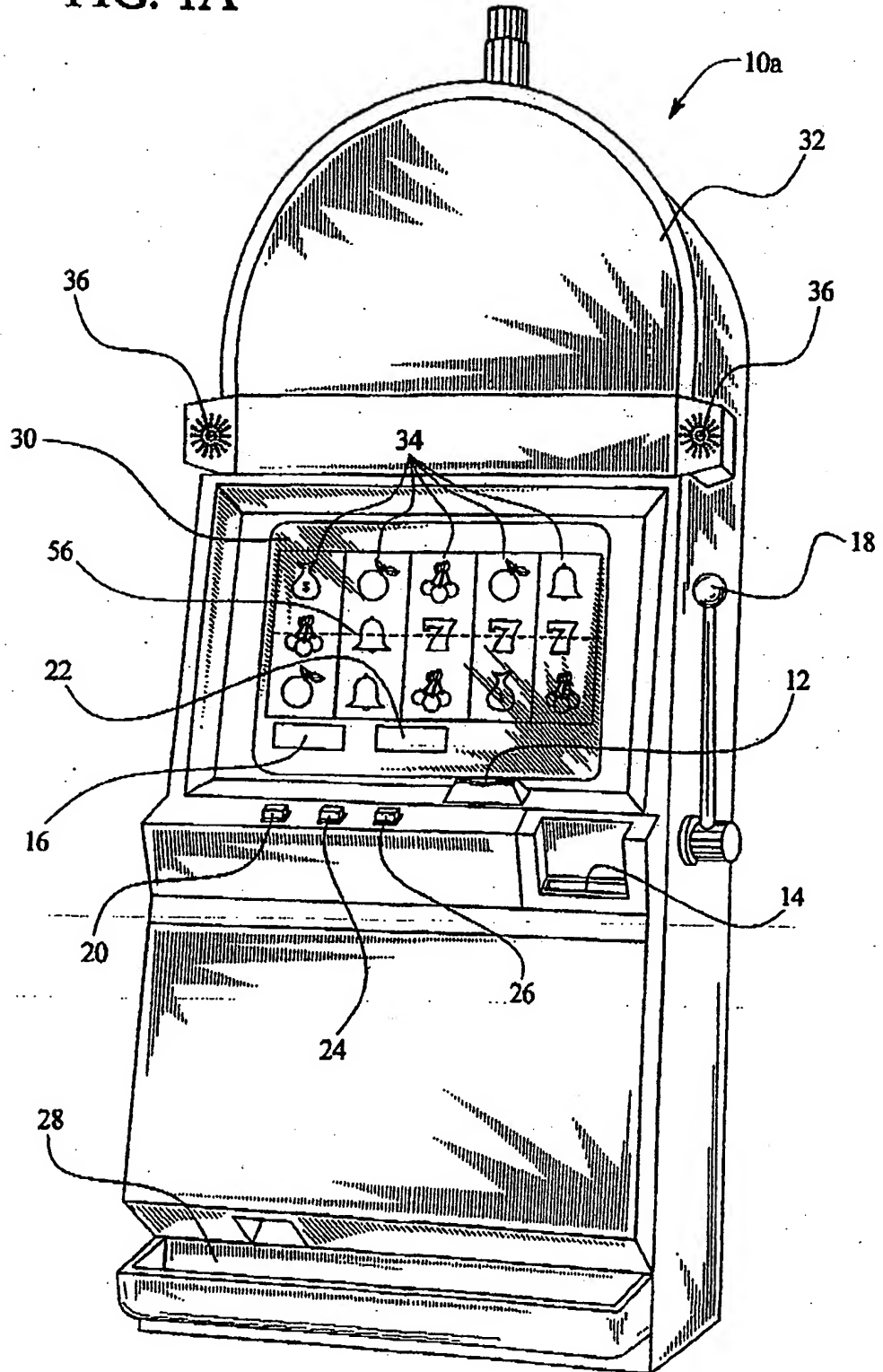


FIG. 1B

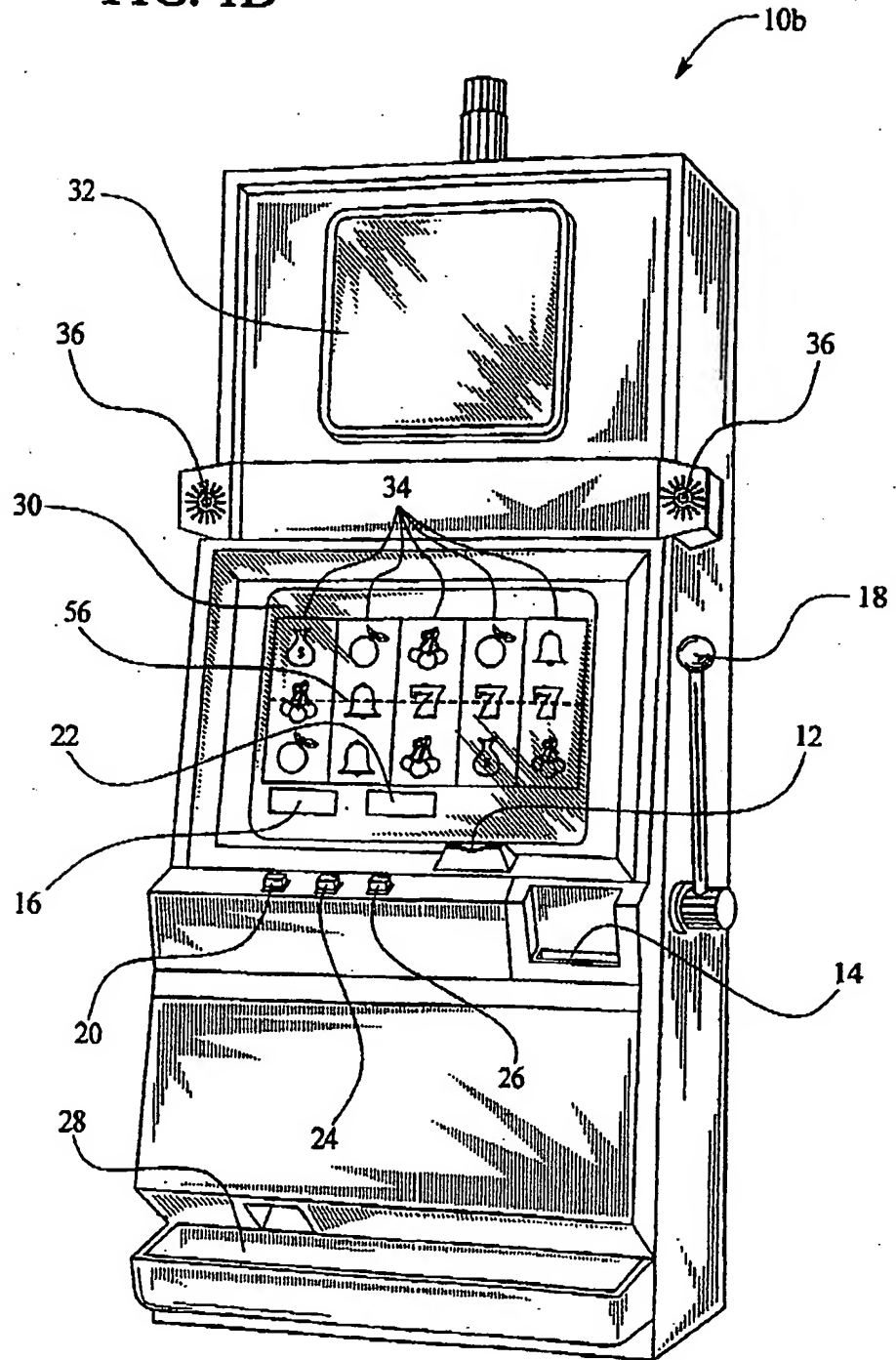


FIG. 2

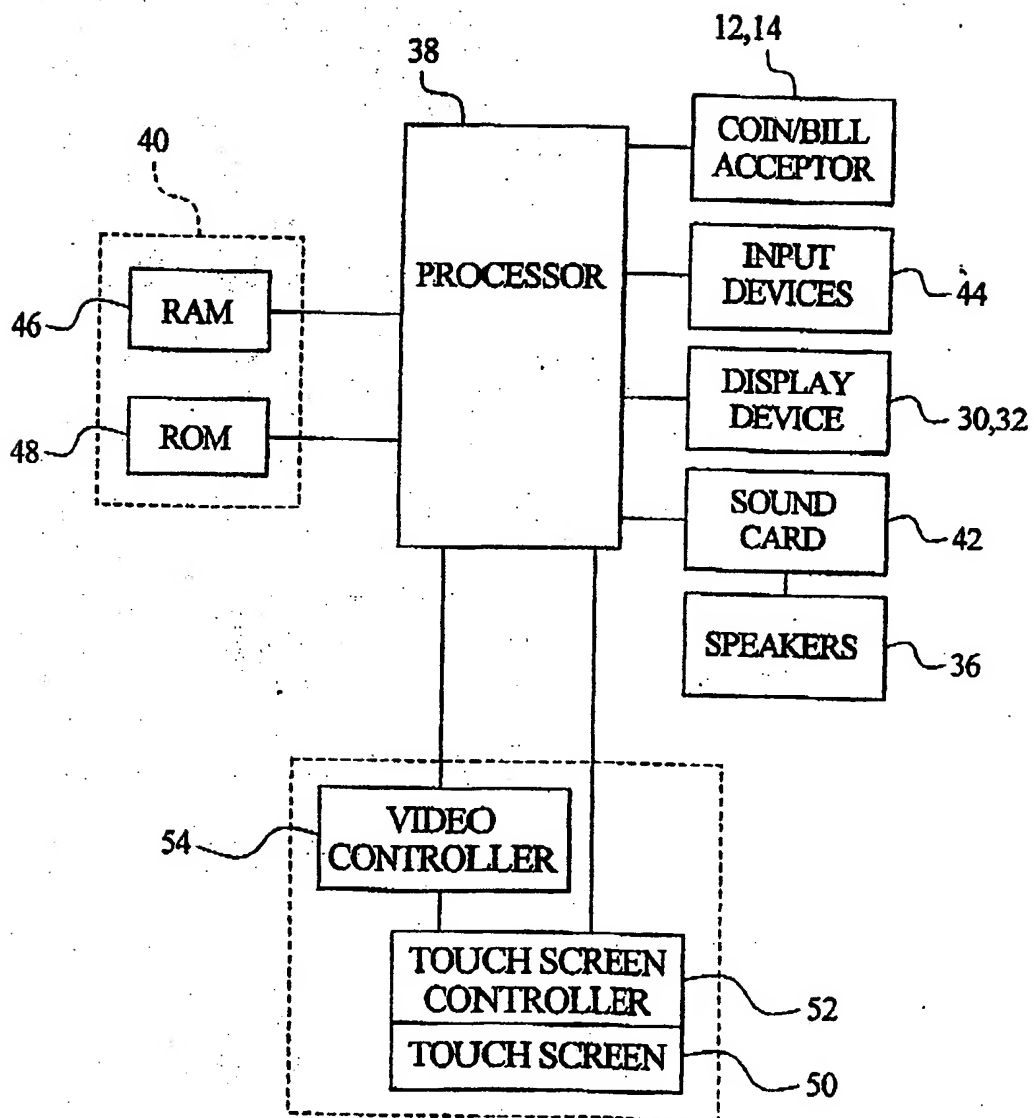


FIG. 3A

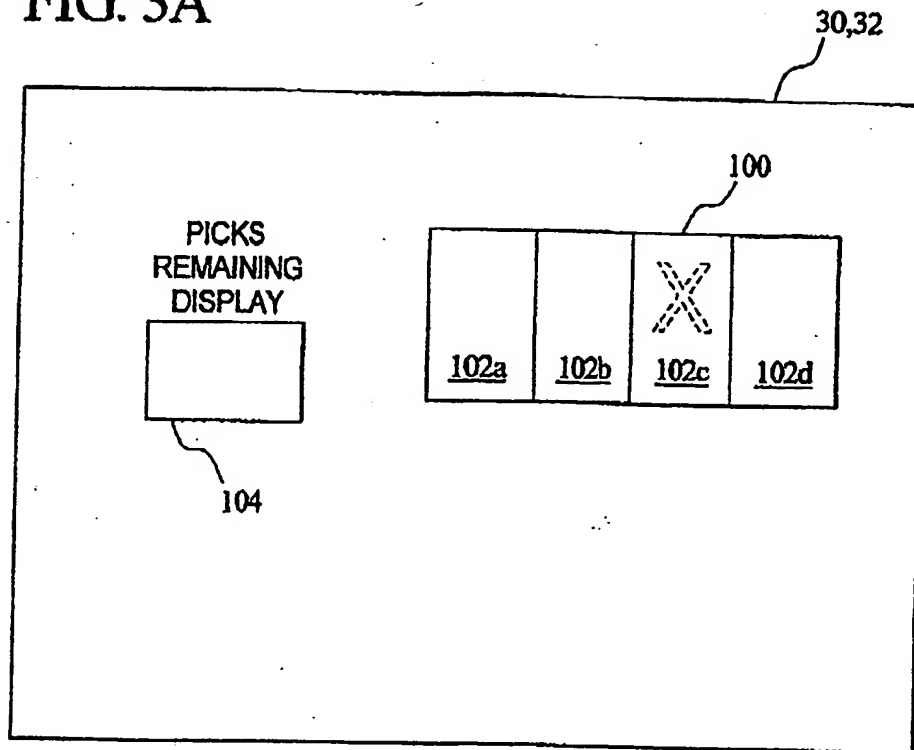


FIG. 3B

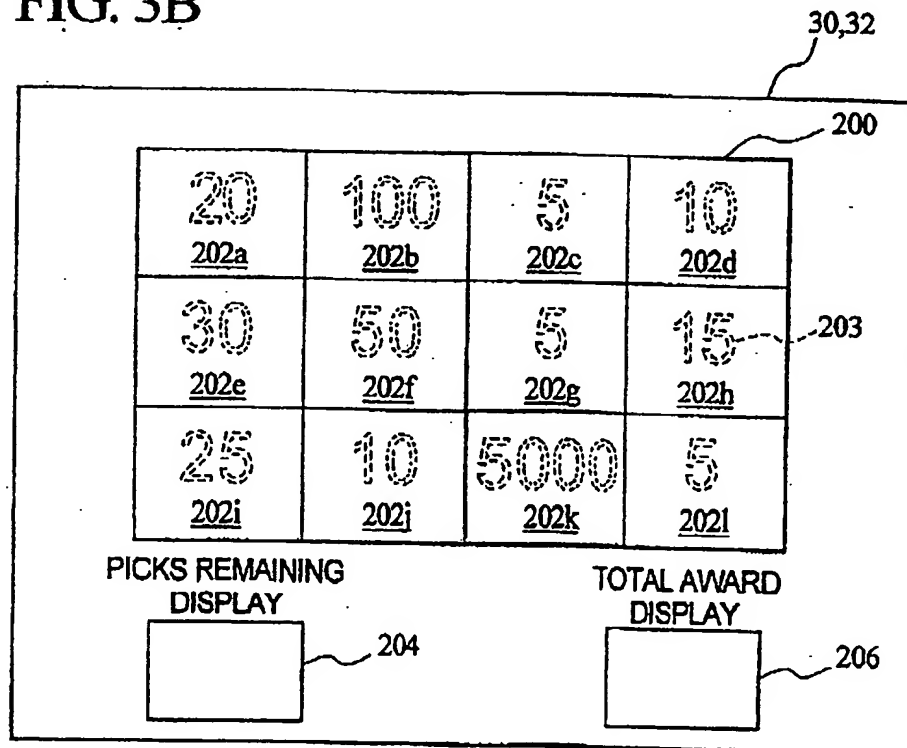


FIG. 4A

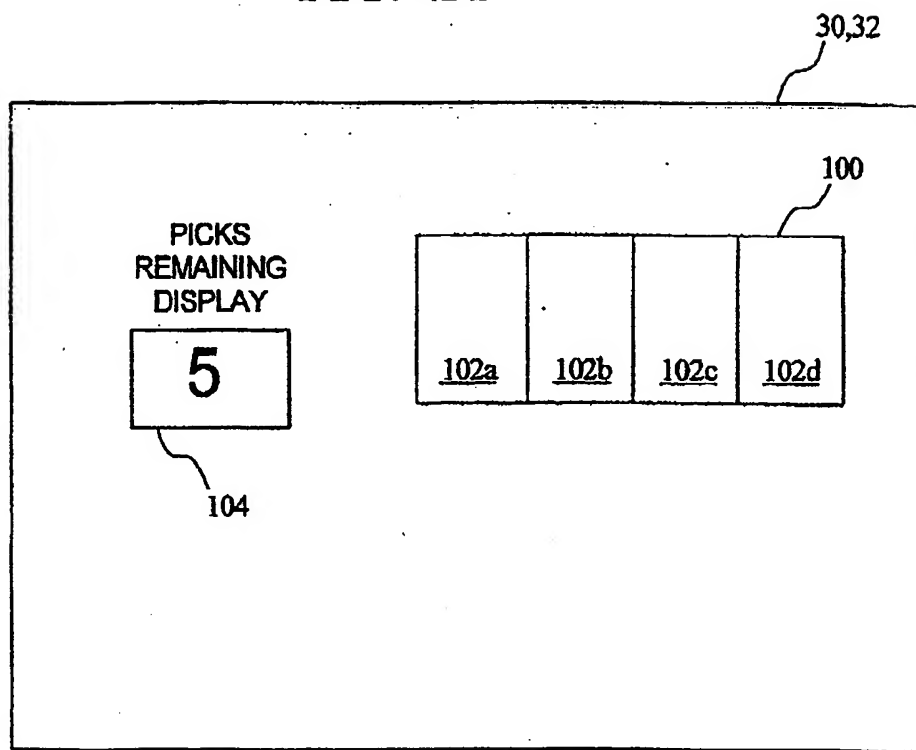


FIG. 4B

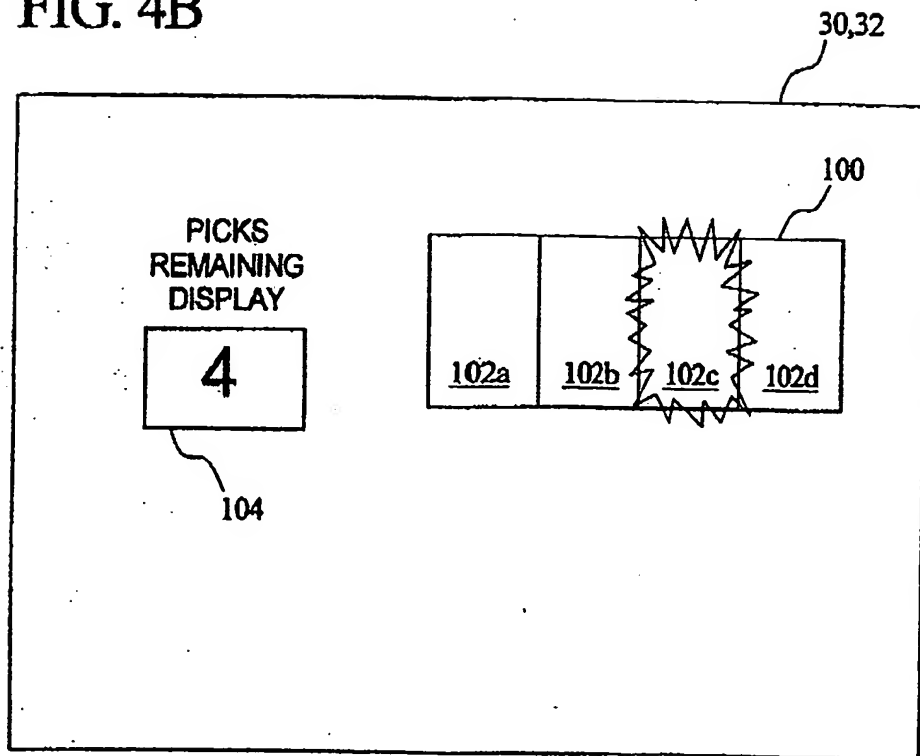


FIG. 4C

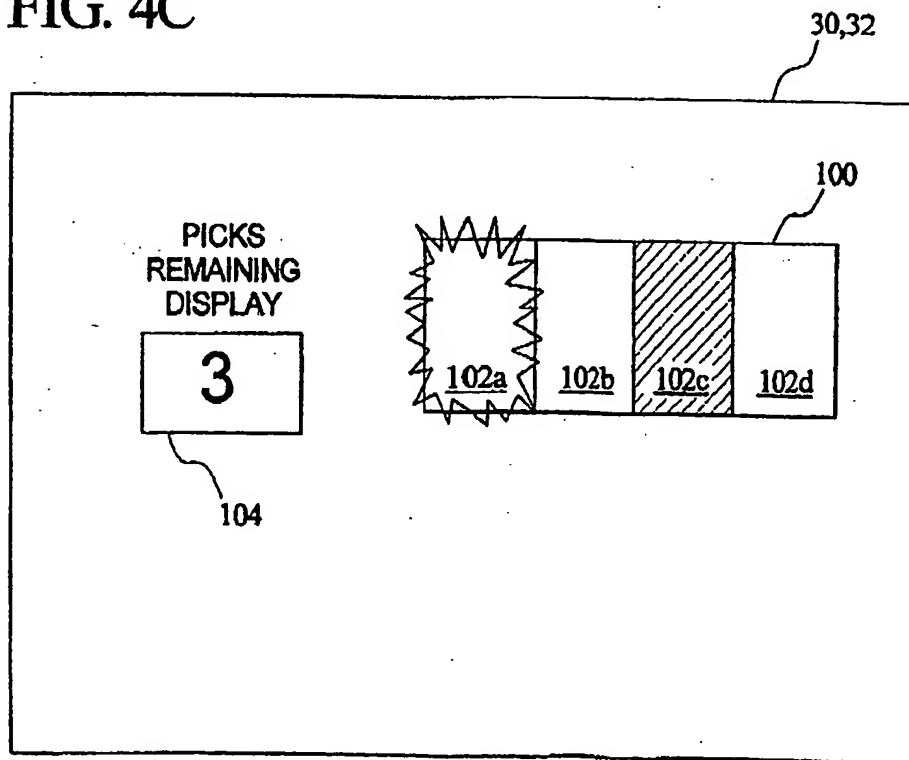


FIG. 4D

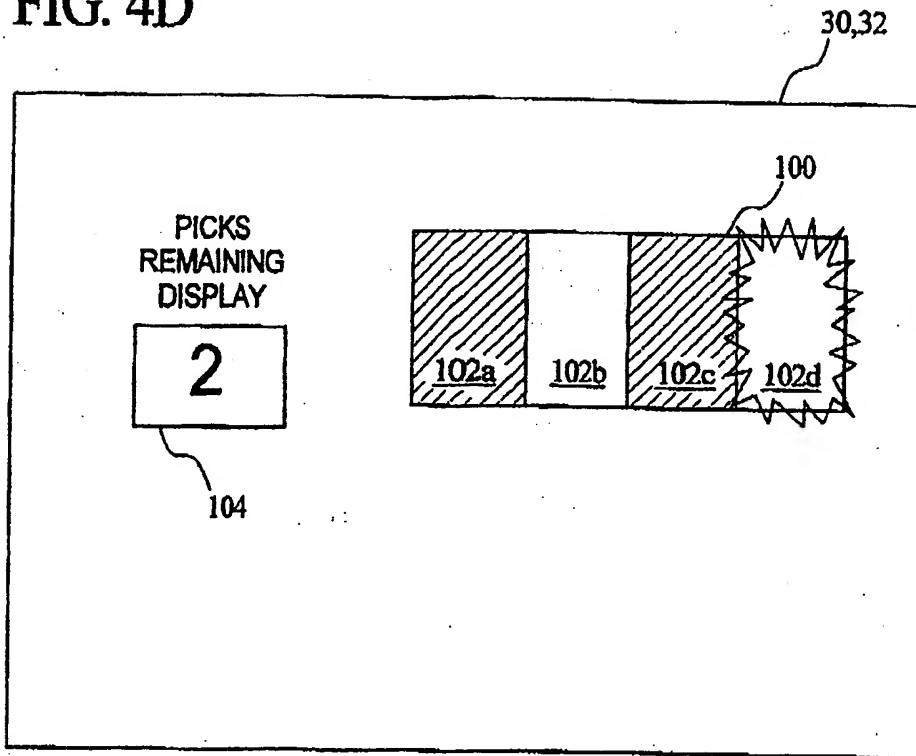


FIG. 4E

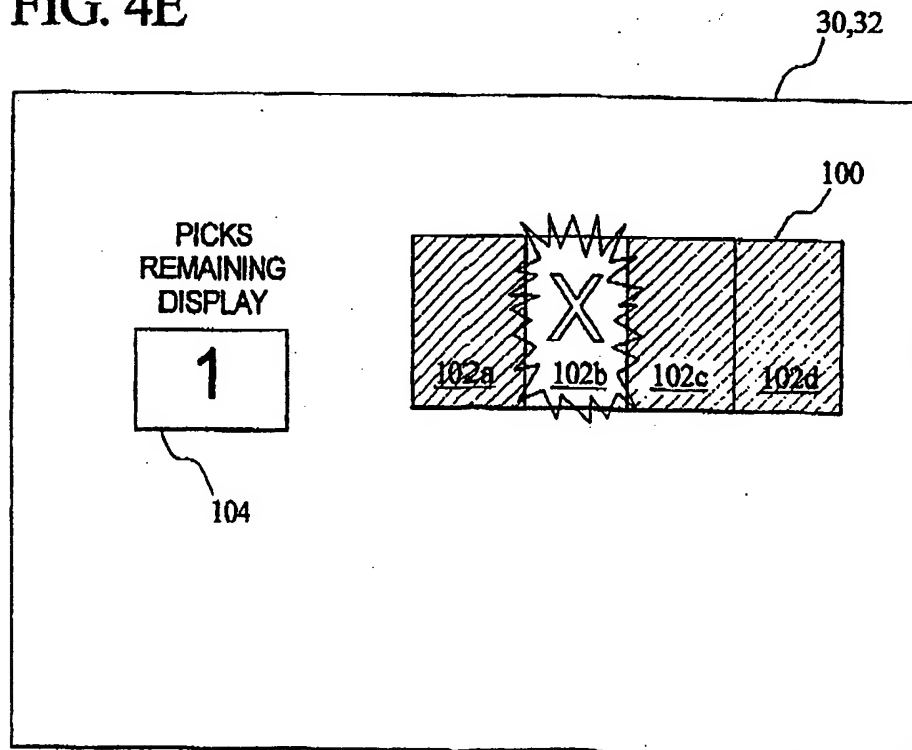


FIG. 4F

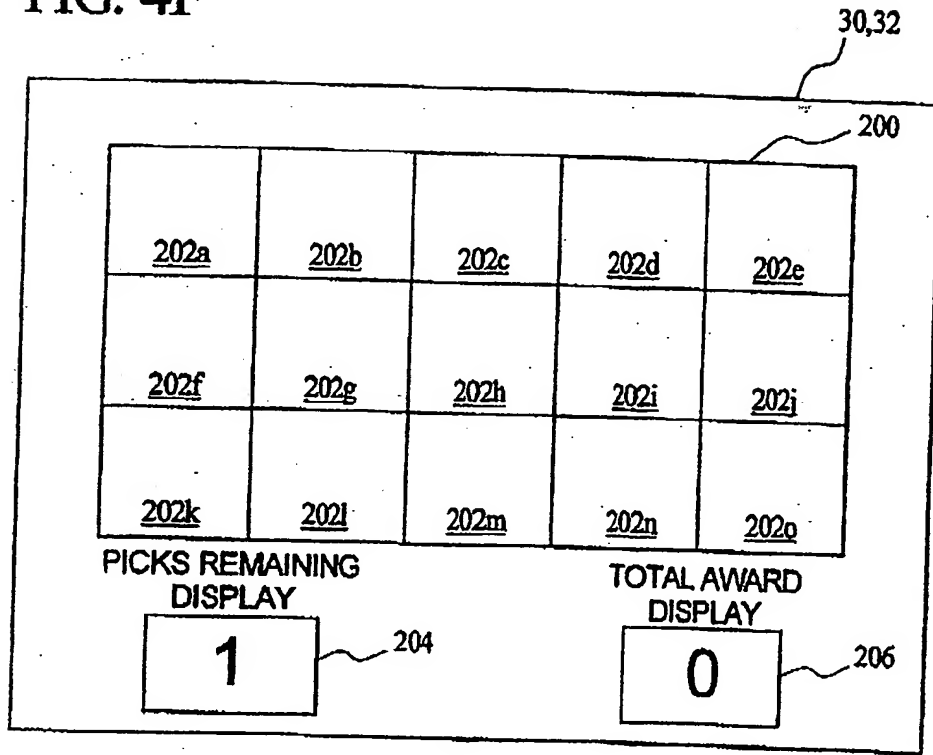


FIG. 4G

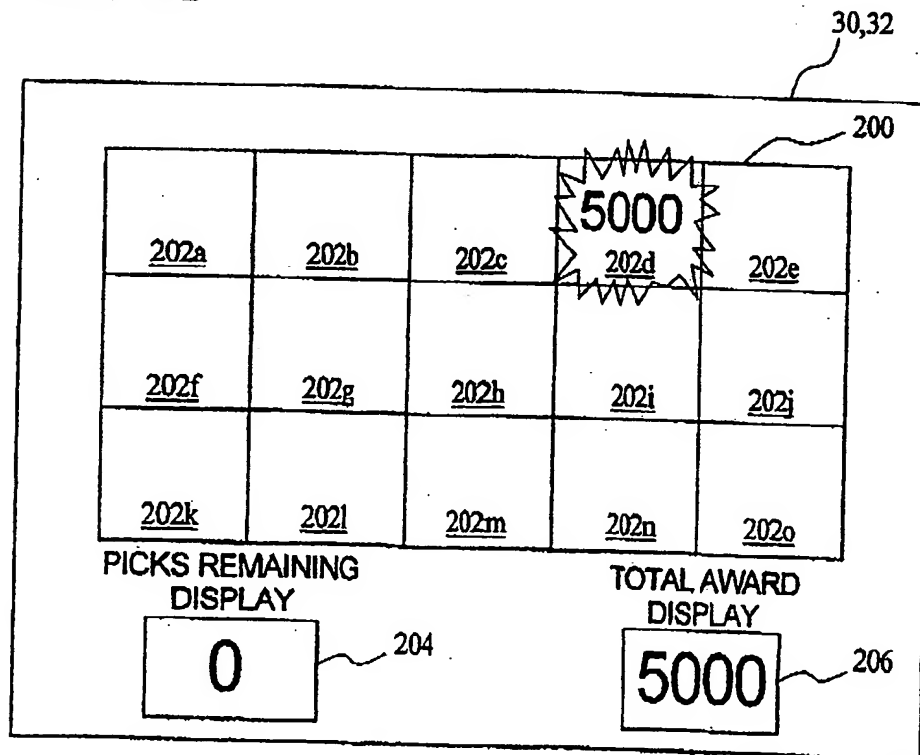


FIG. 5A

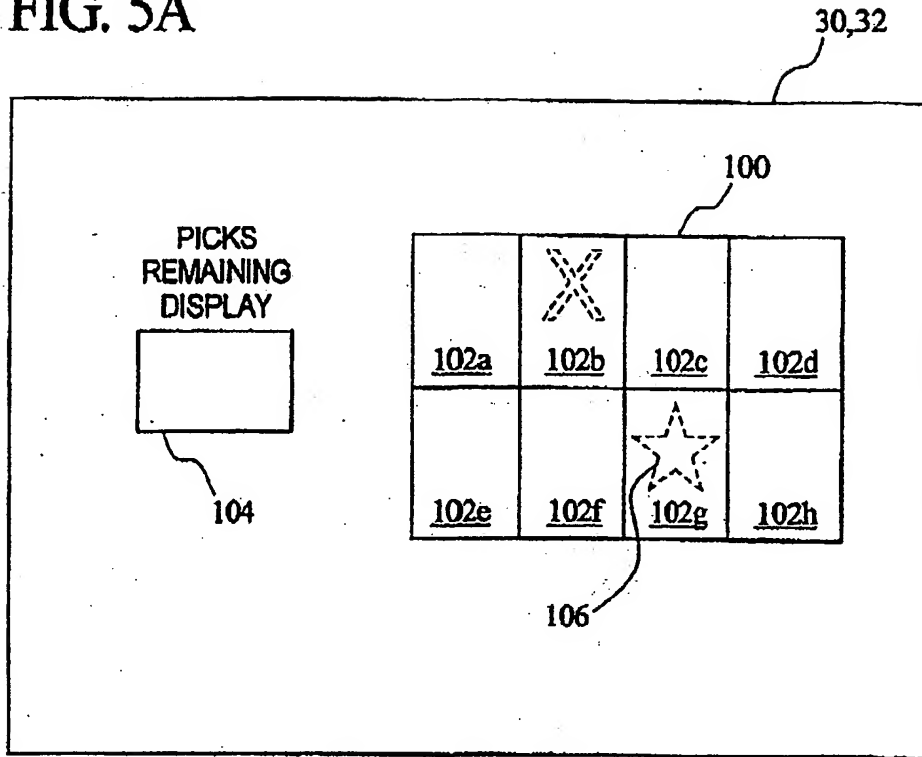
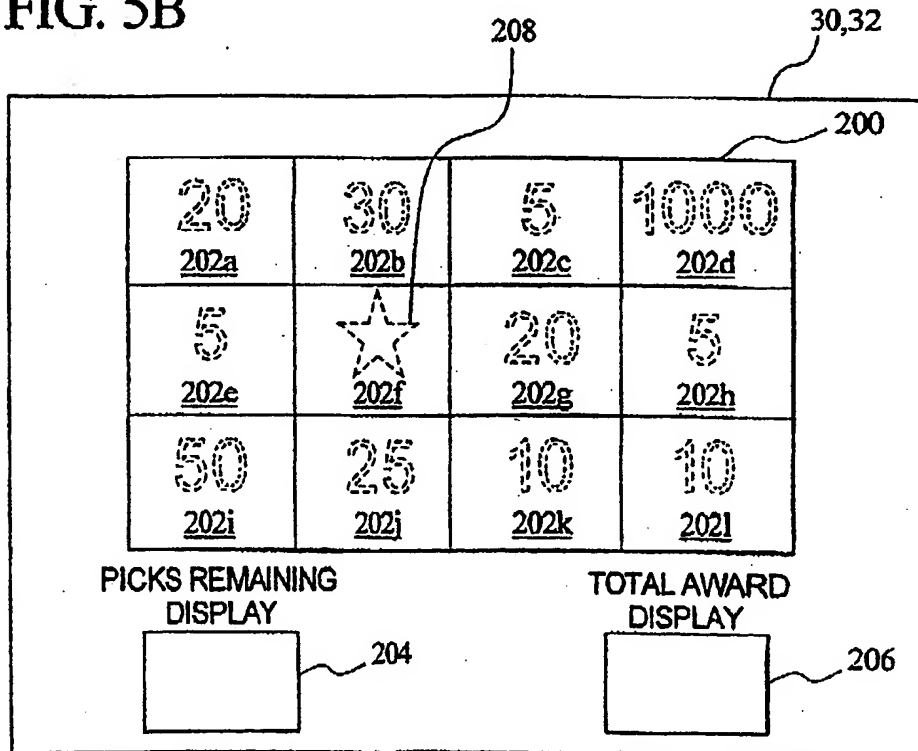


FIG. 5B



10/26

FIG. 6

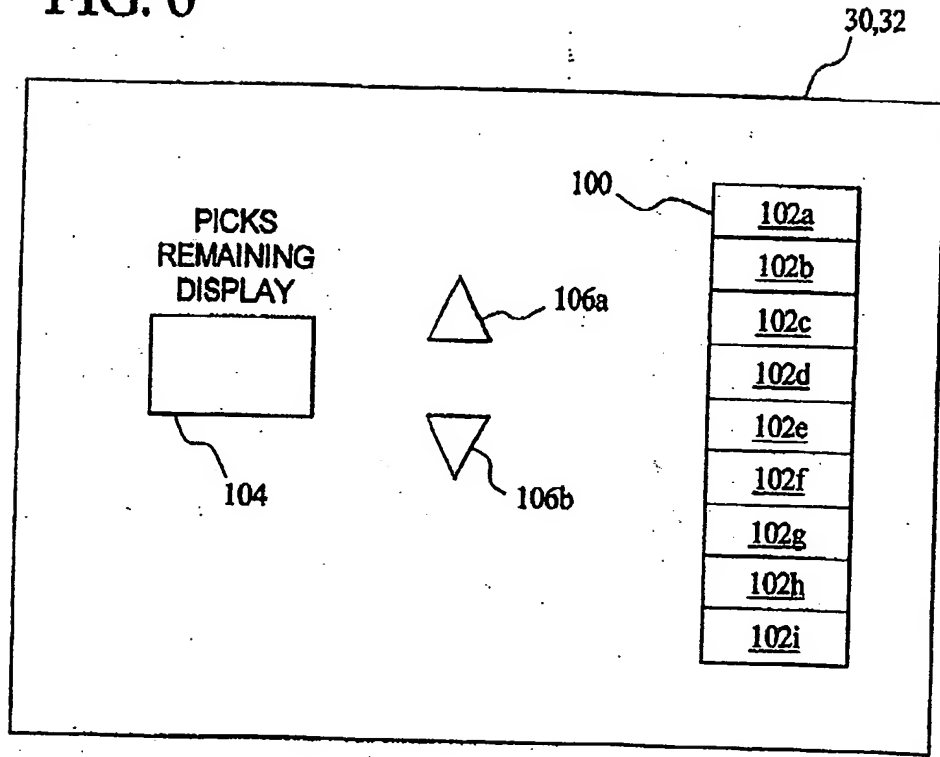


FIG. 7

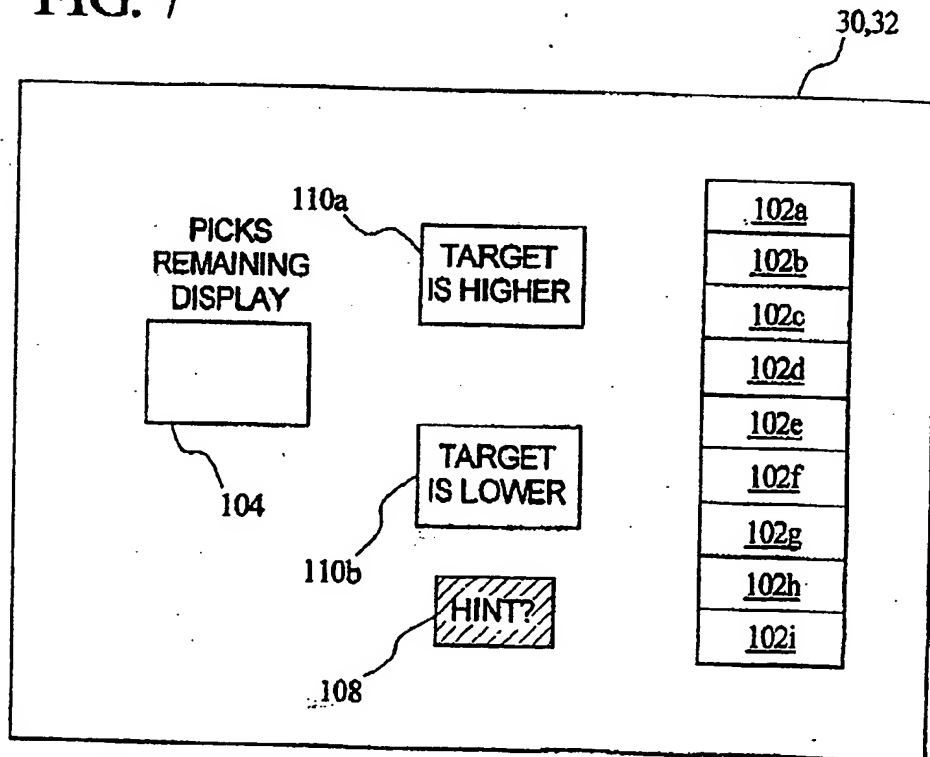


FIG. 8A

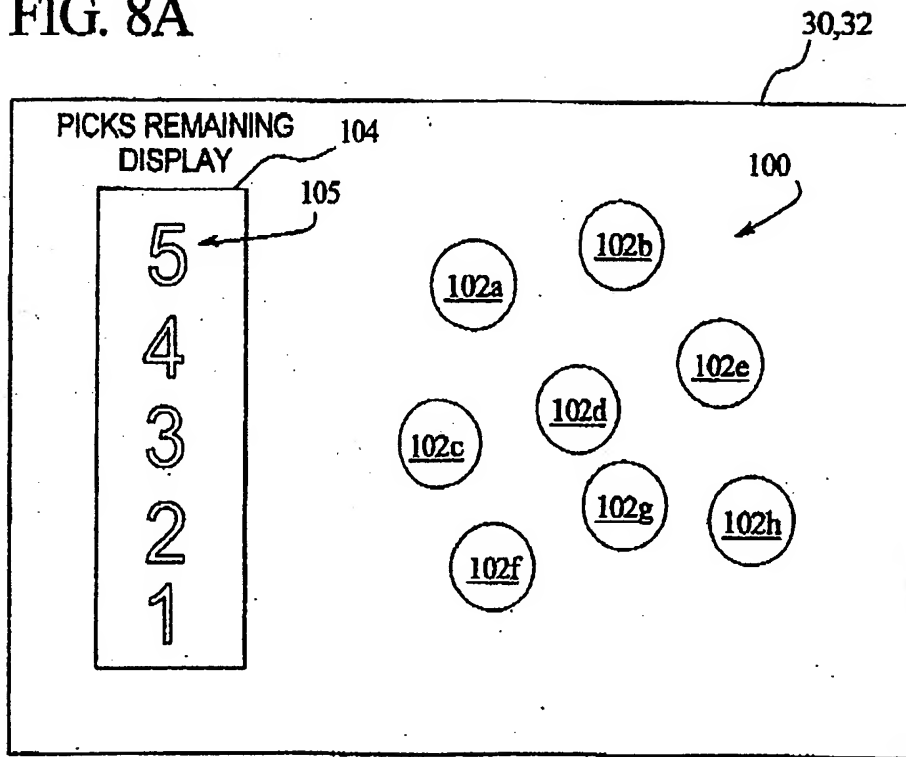


FIG. 8B

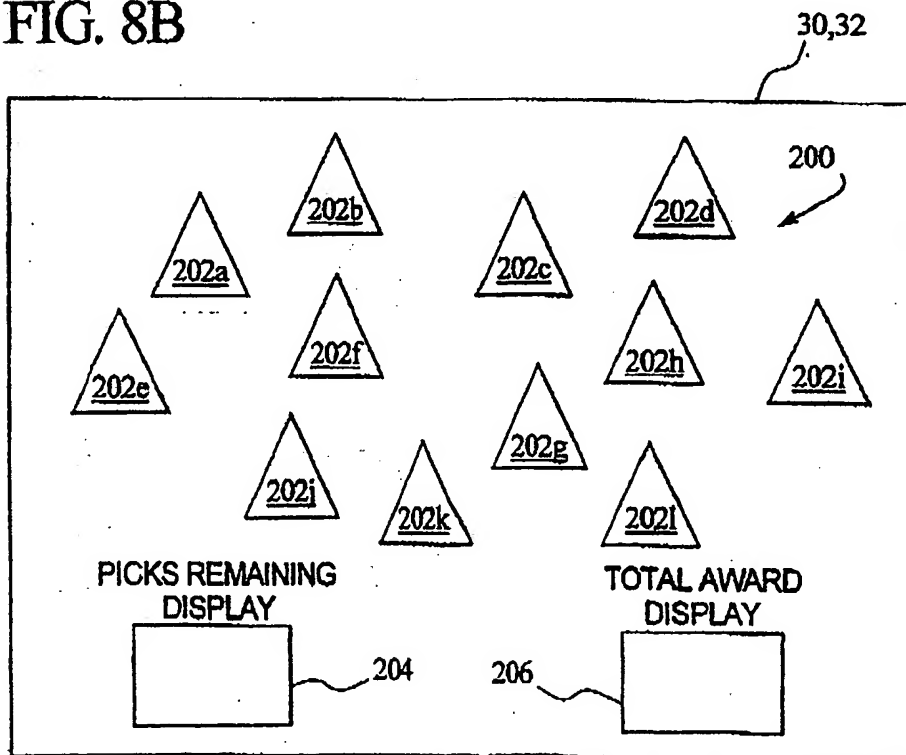


FIG. 9A

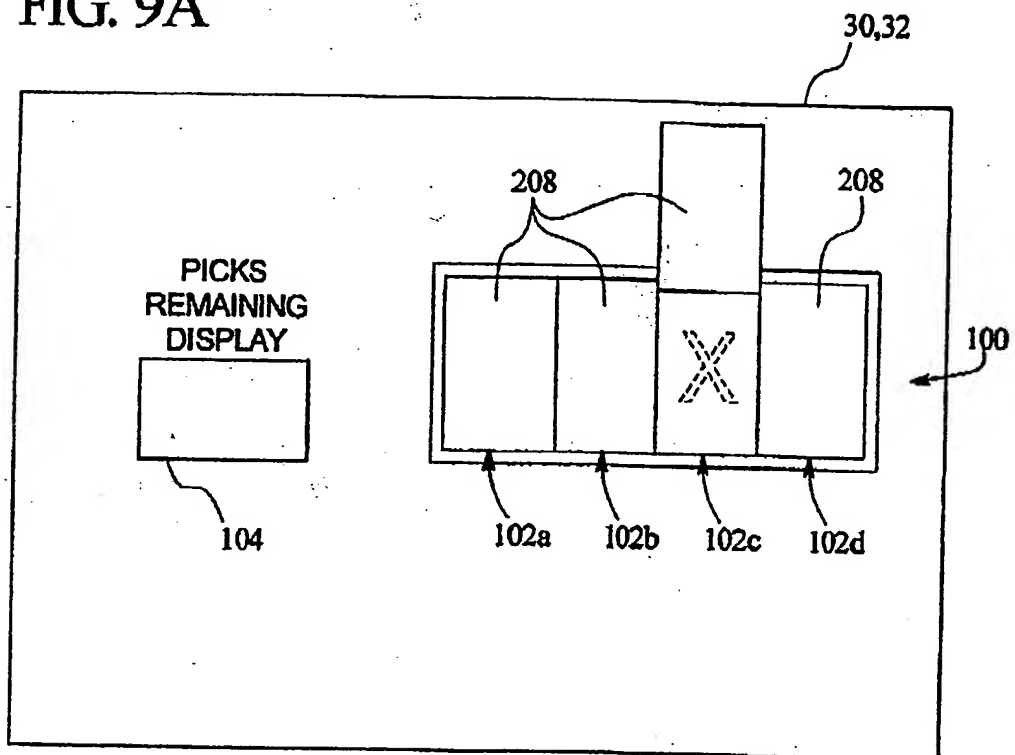


FIG. 9B

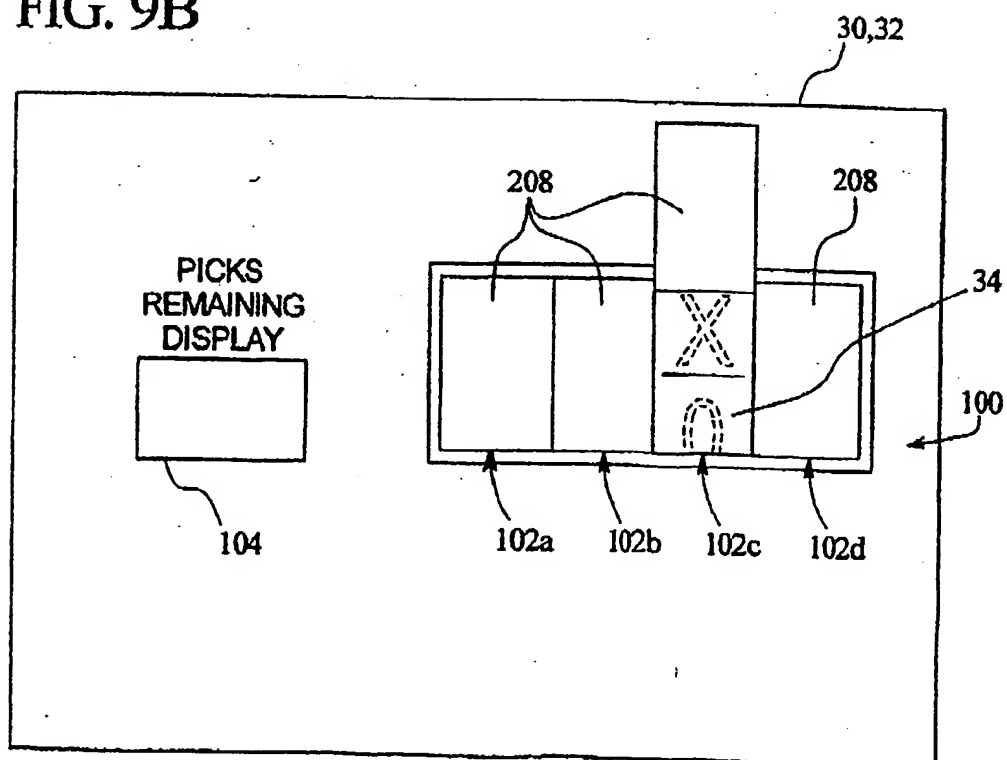


FIG. 10

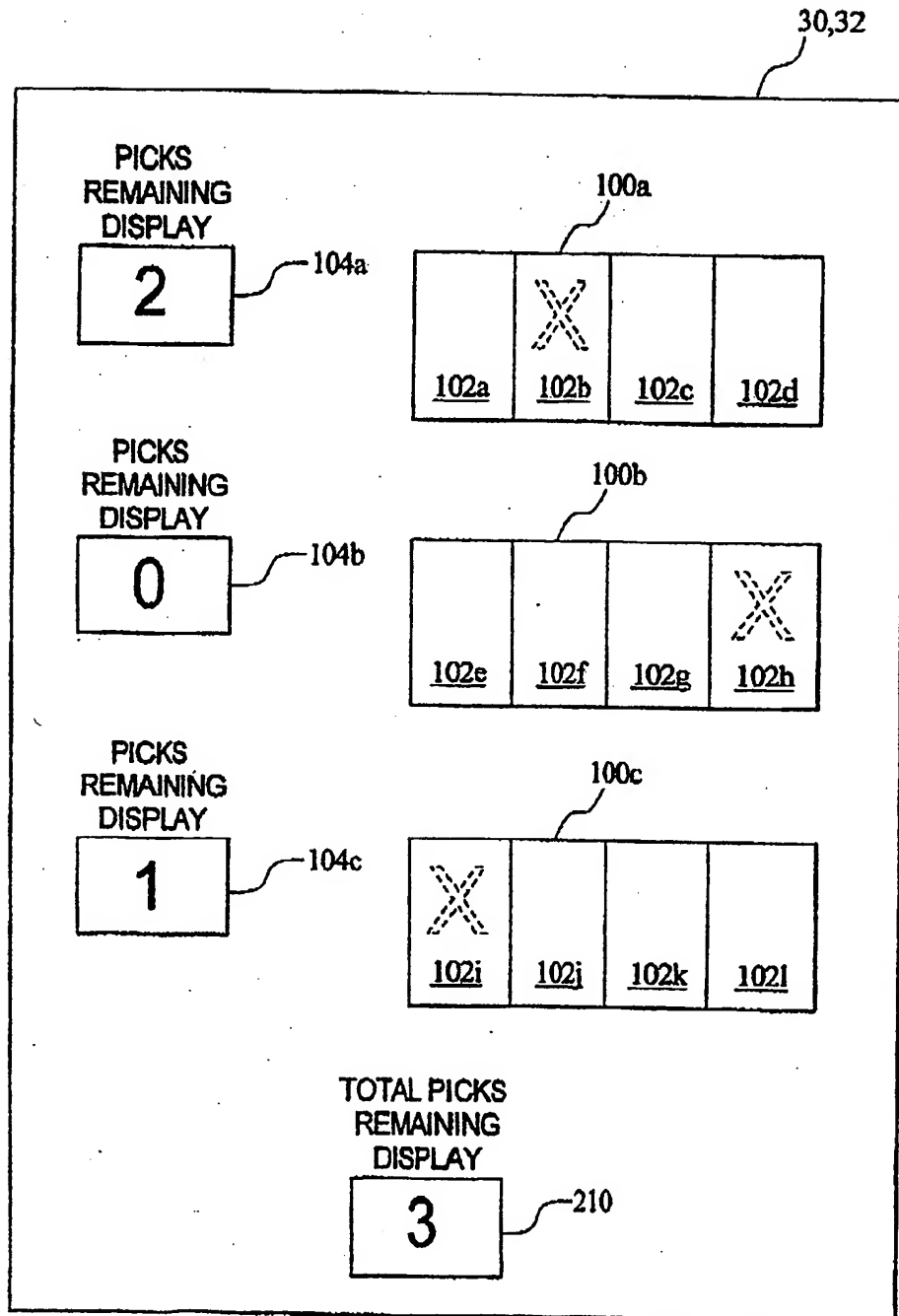


FIG 11A

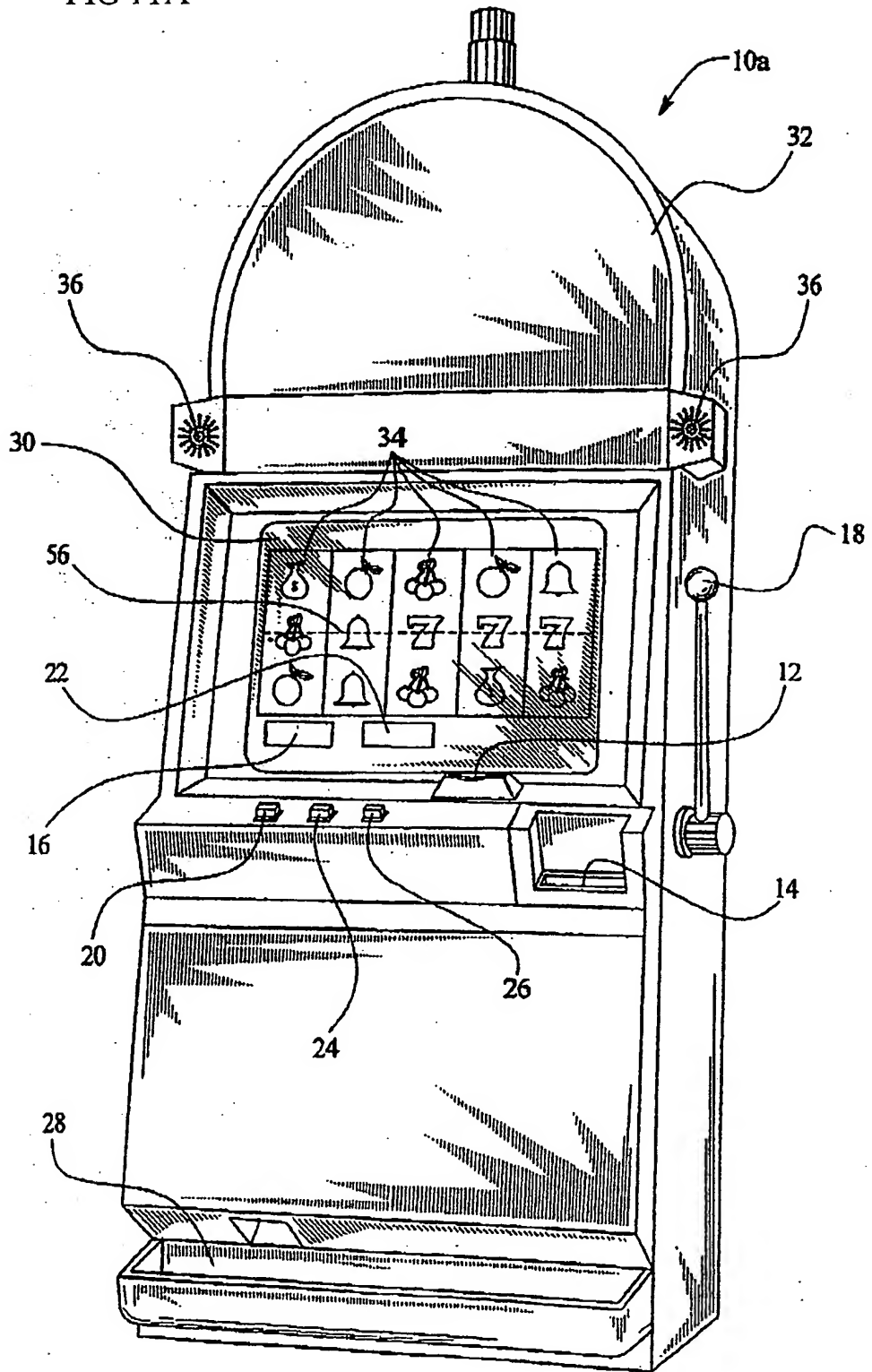


FIG 11B

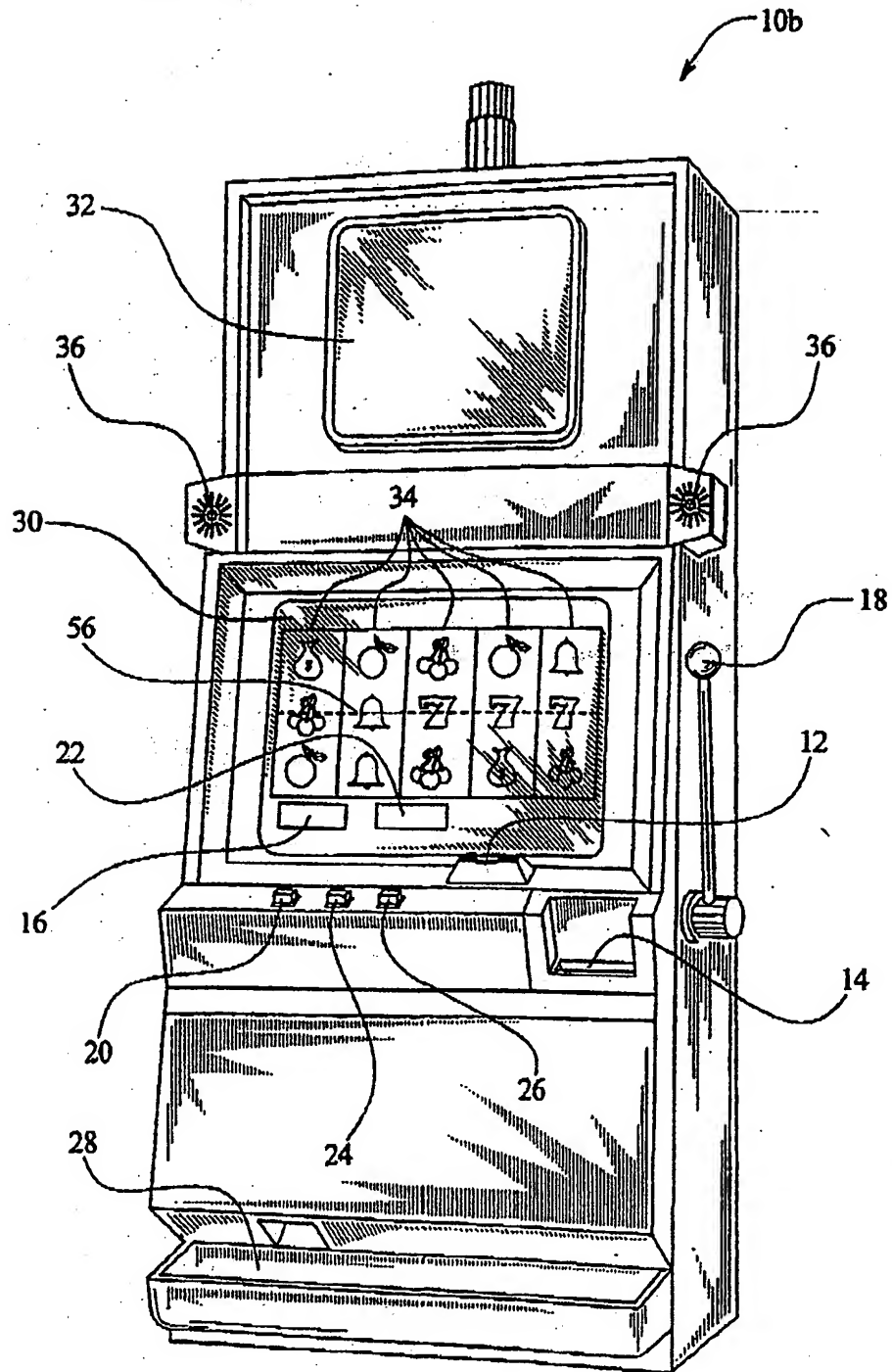


FIG 12

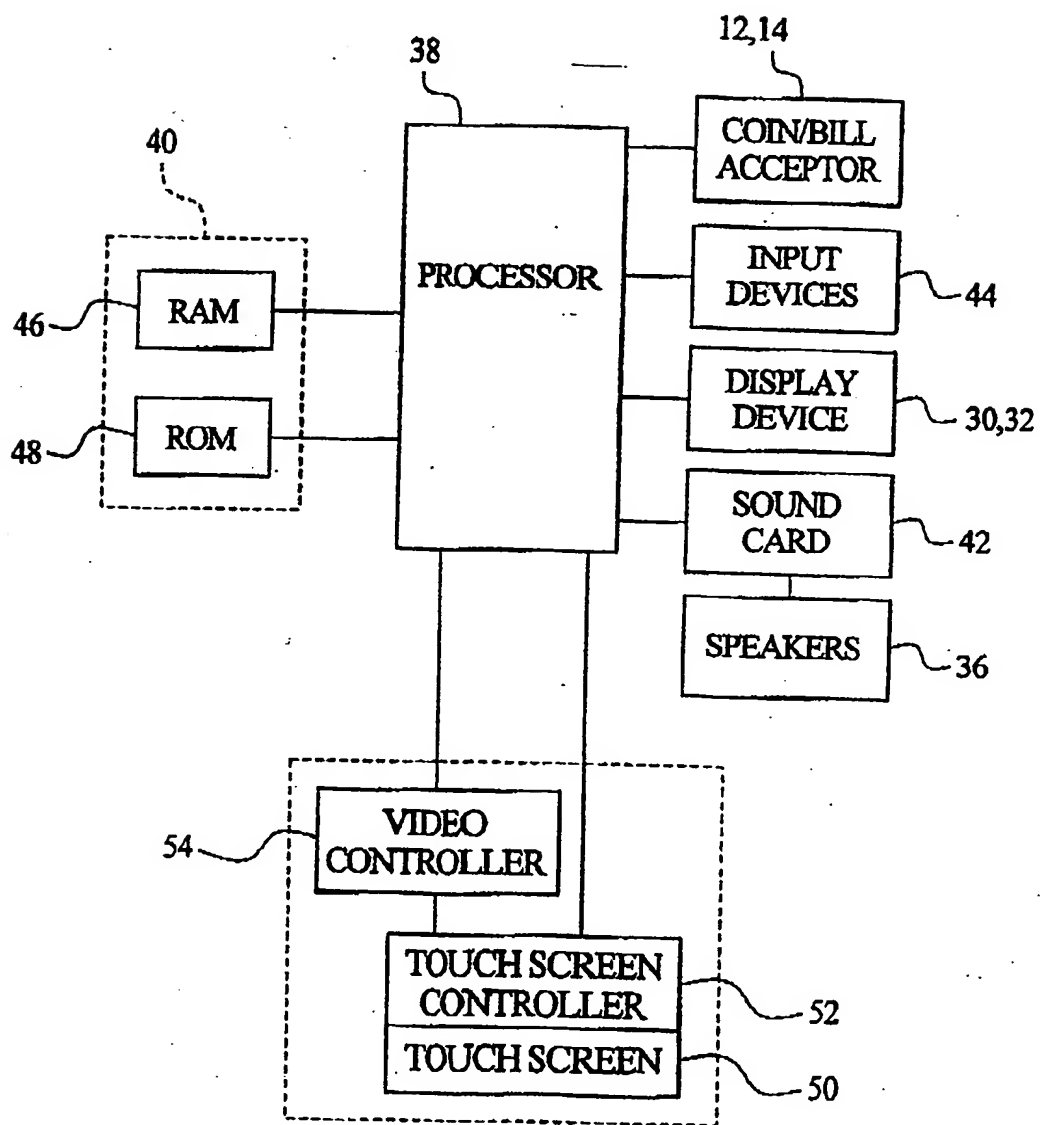


FIG 13

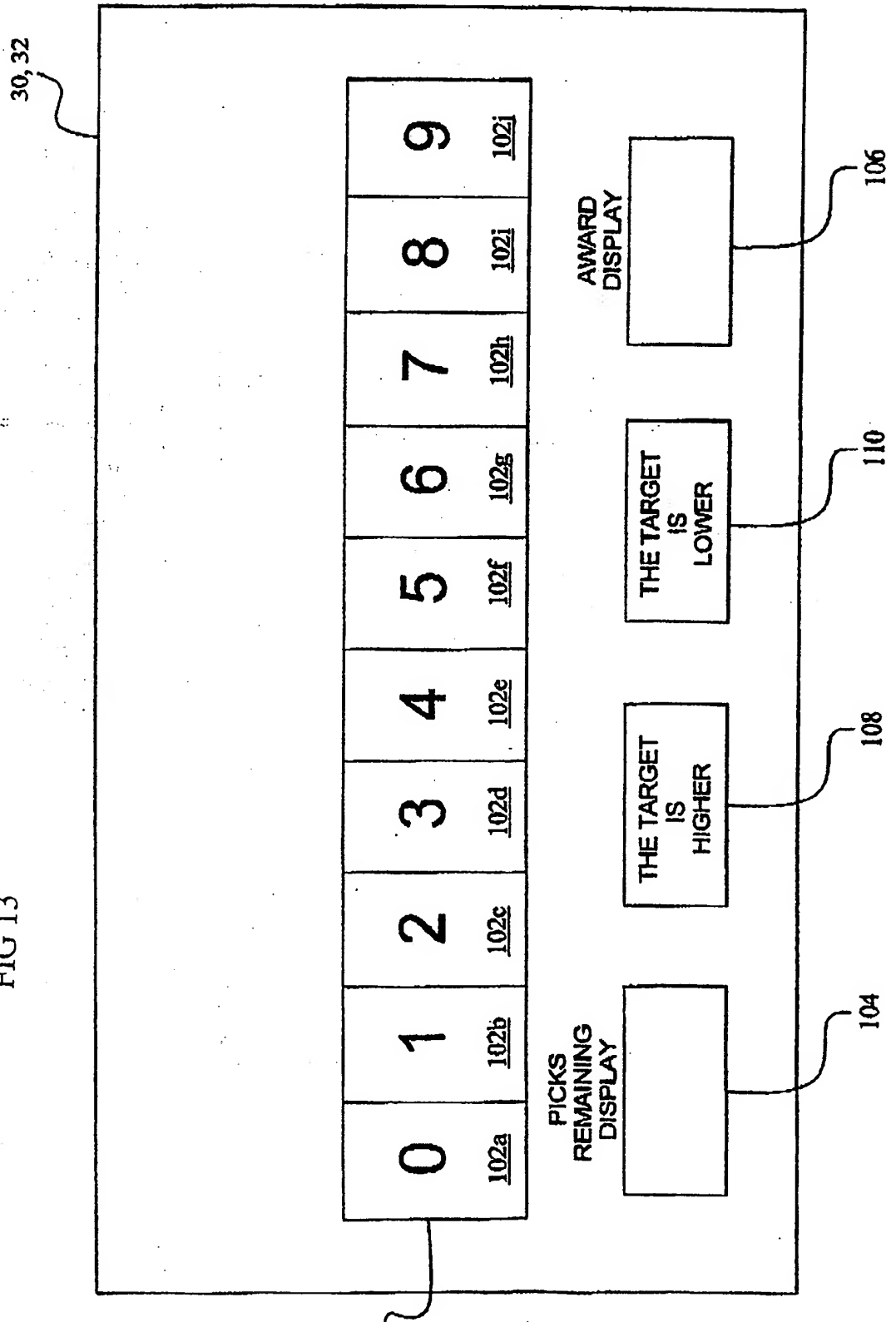


FIG 14

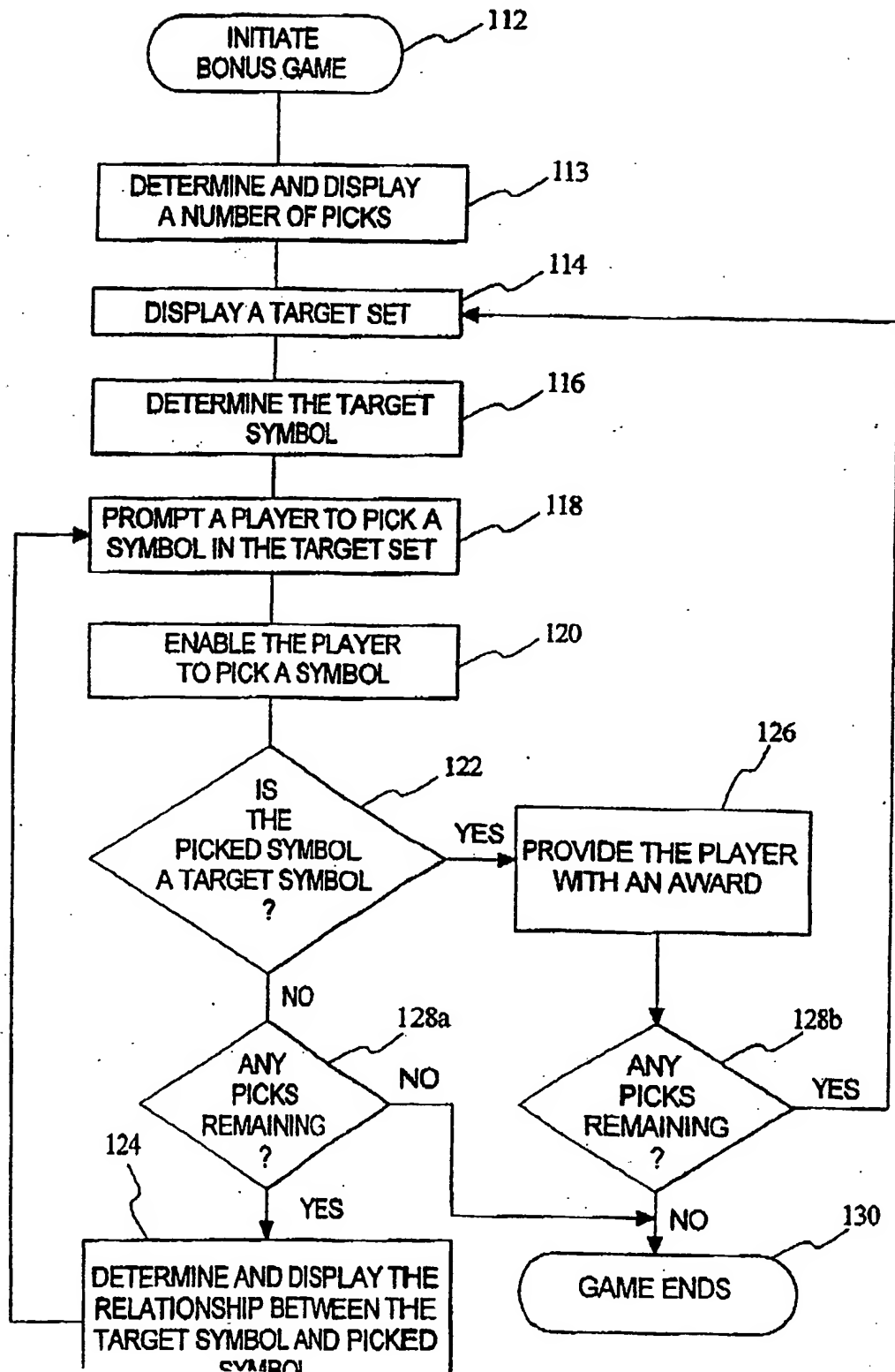


FIG 15A

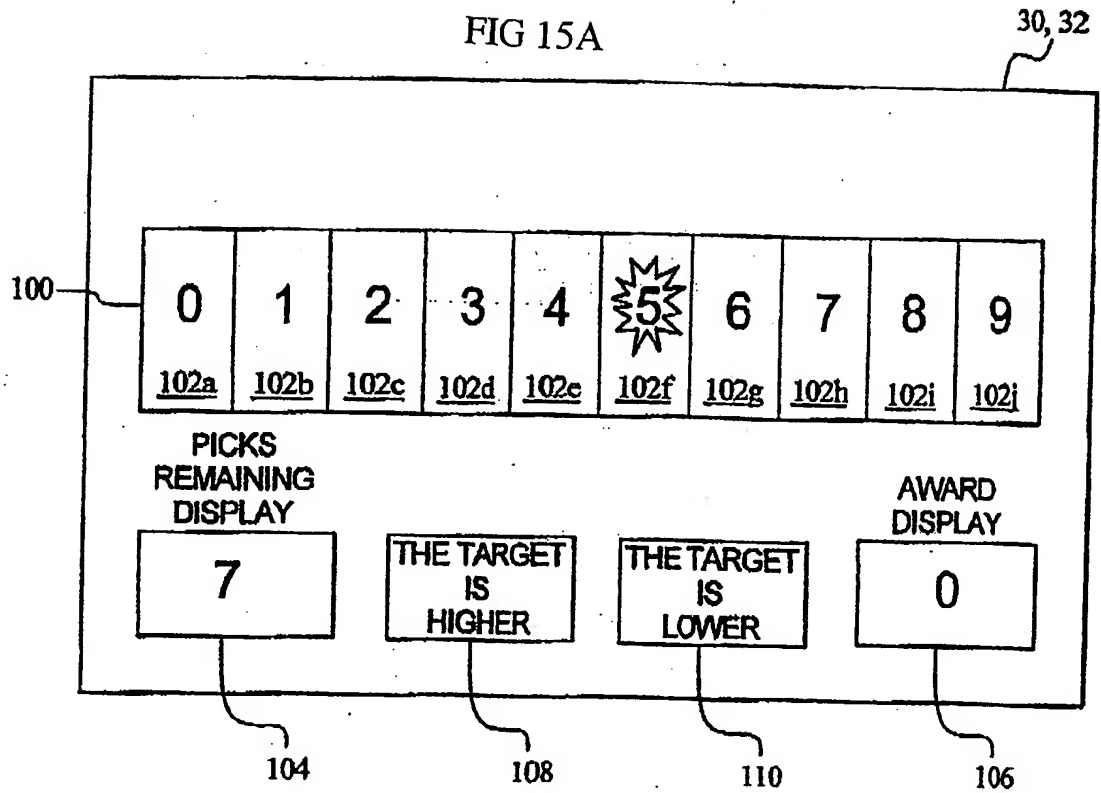
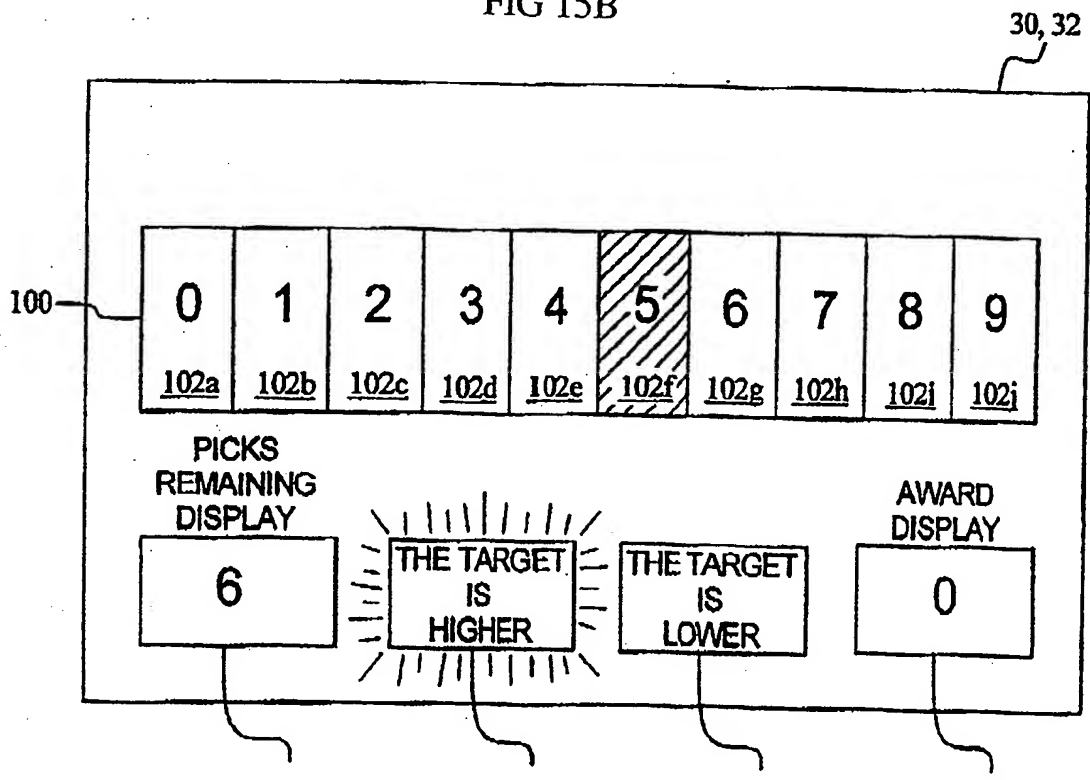


FIG 15B



20/26

FIG 15C

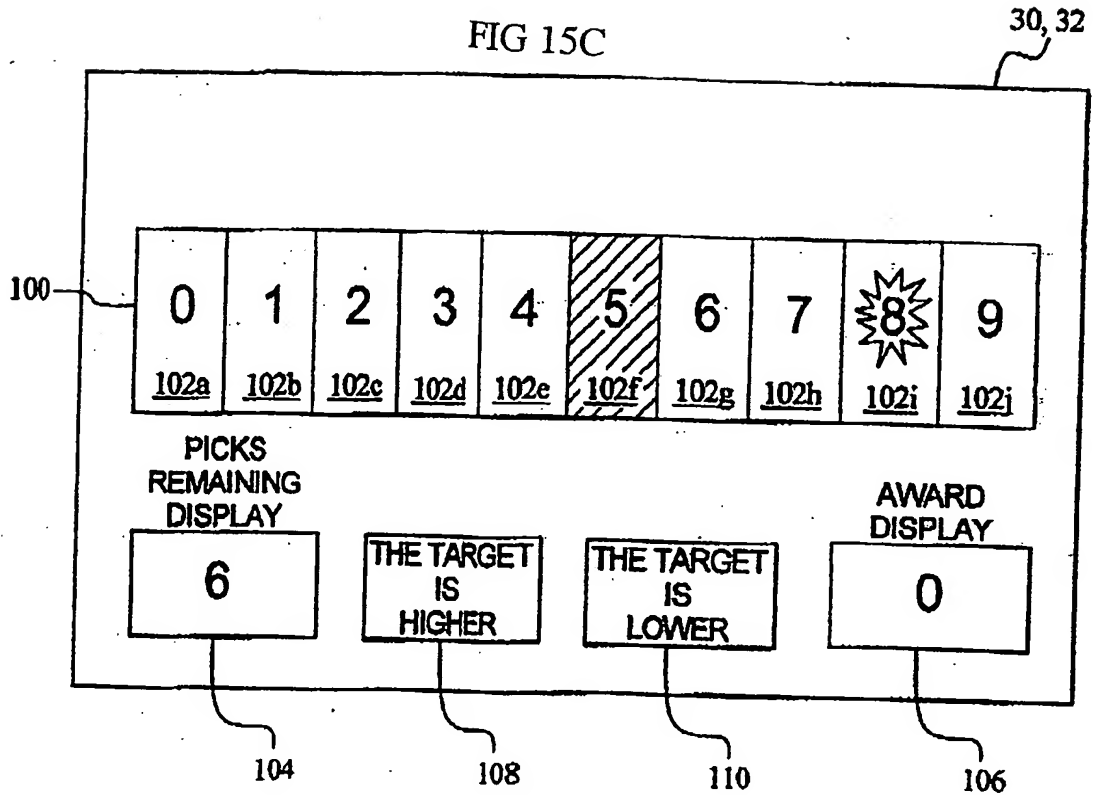


FIG 15D

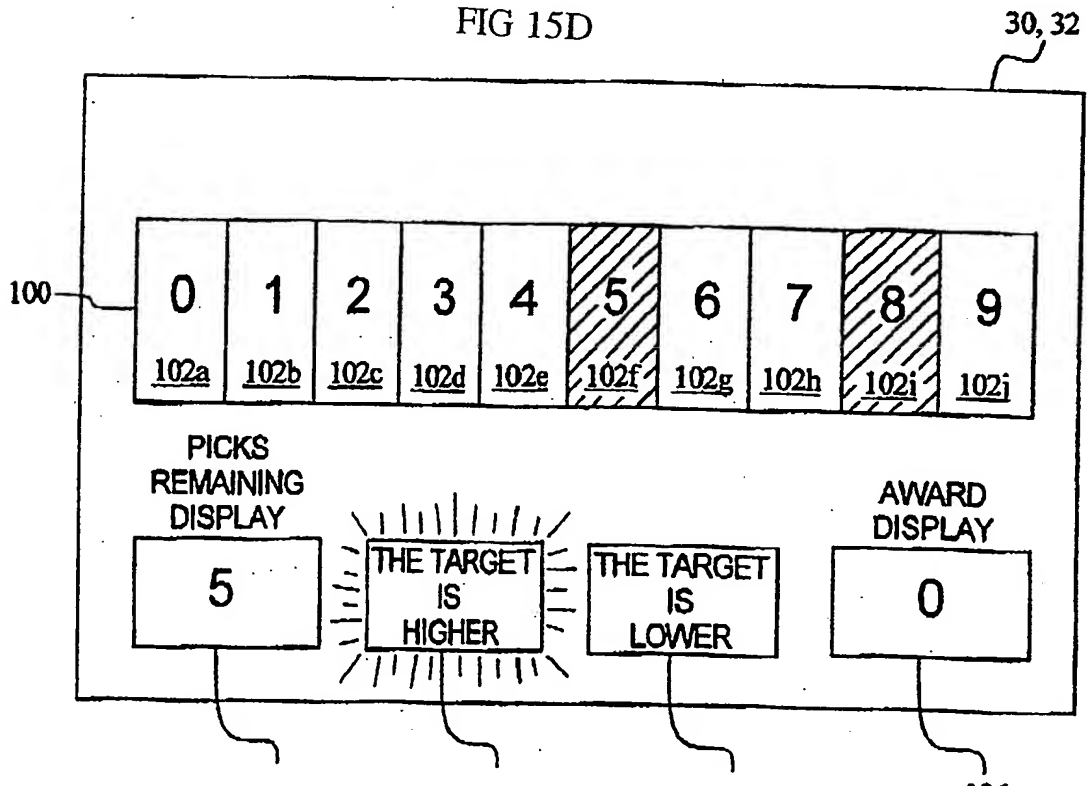


FIG 15E

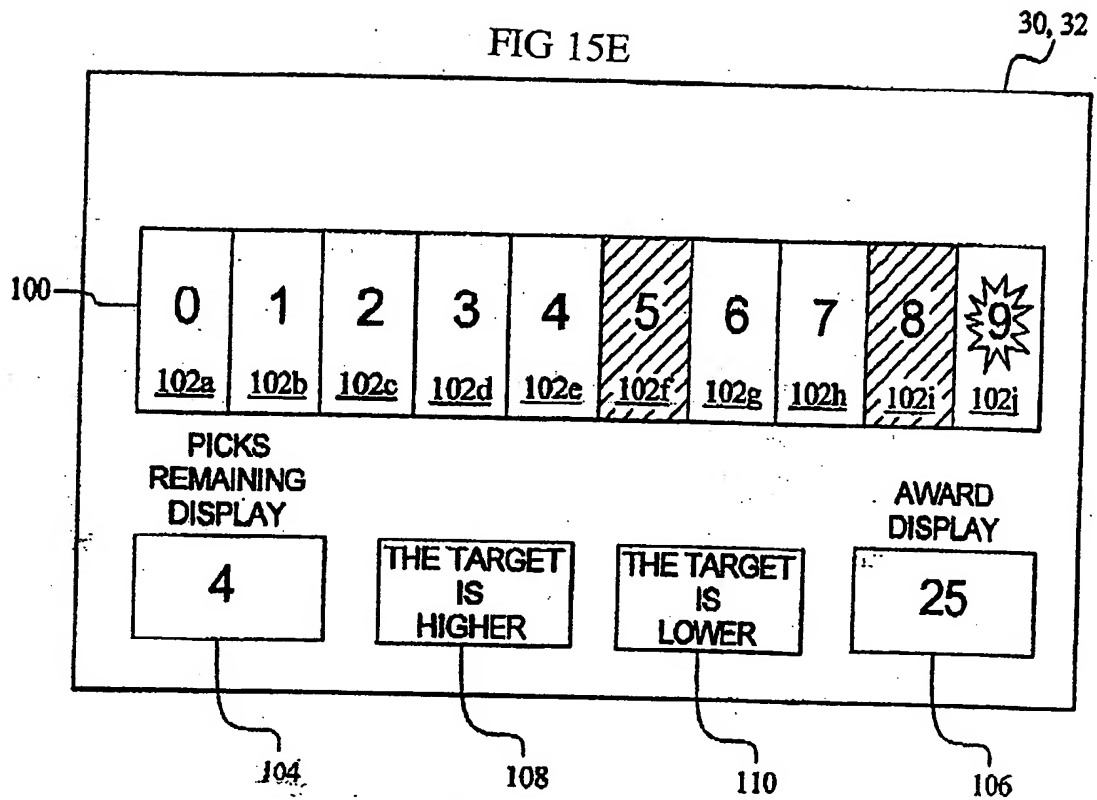


FIG 15F

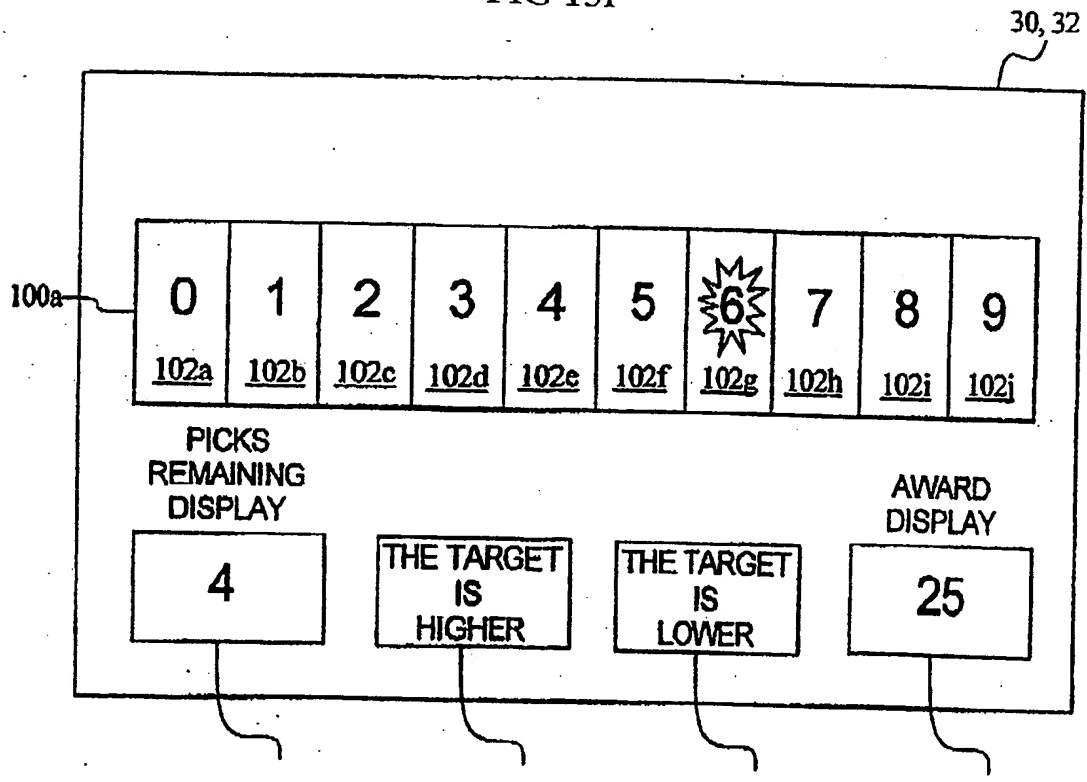


FIG 15G

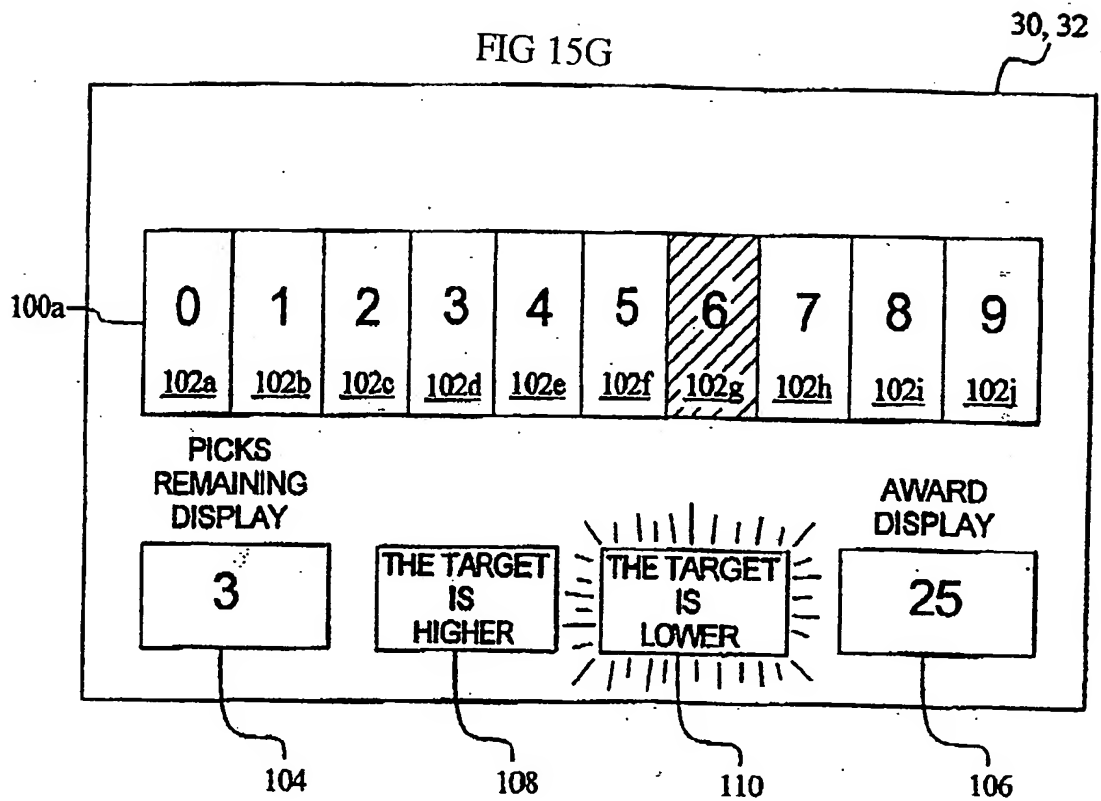


FIG 15H

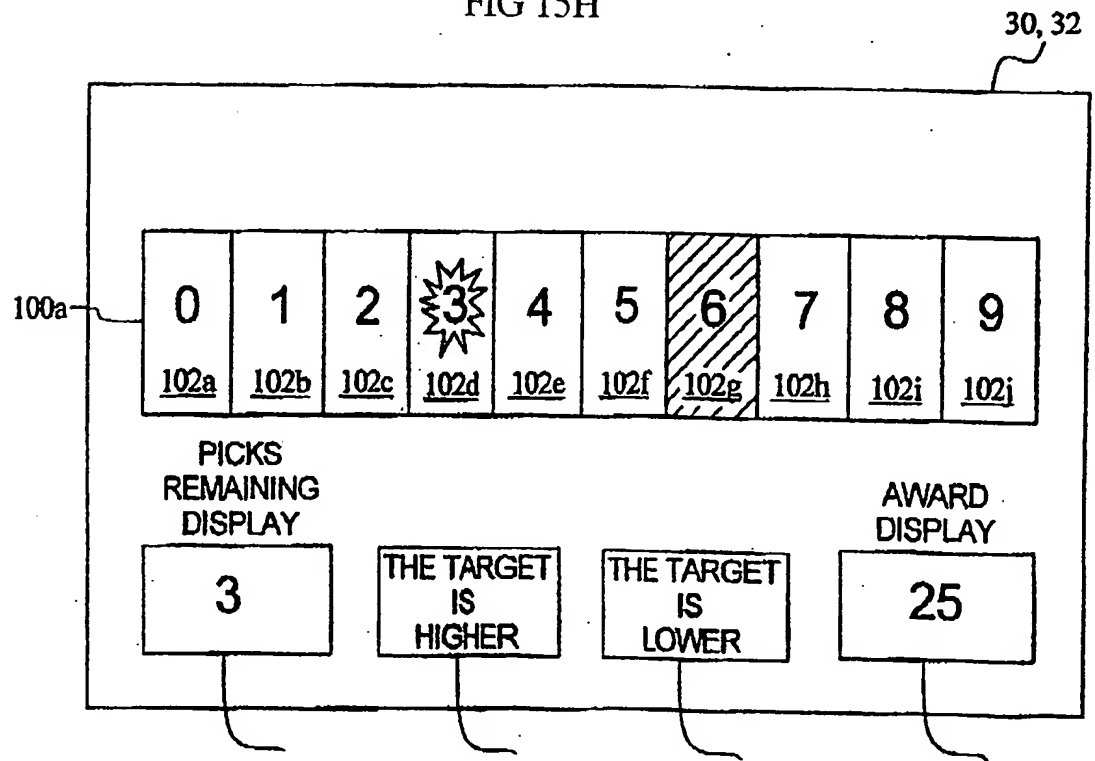


FIG 15I

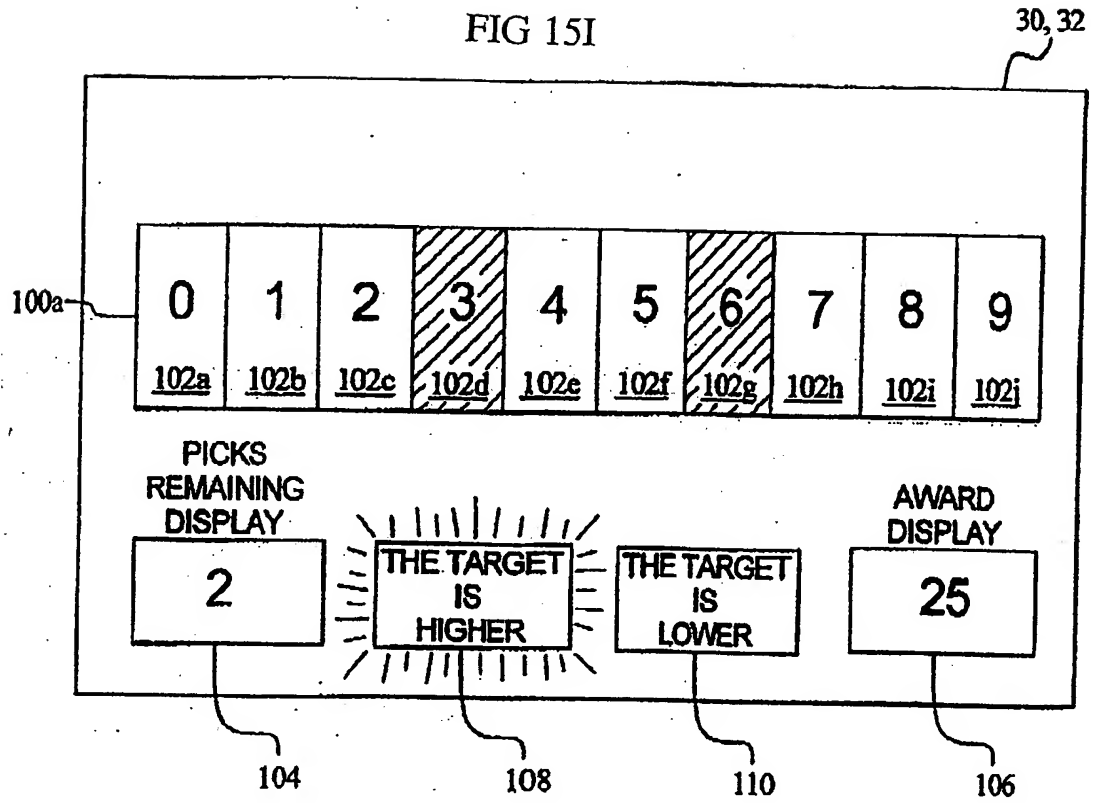


FIG 15J

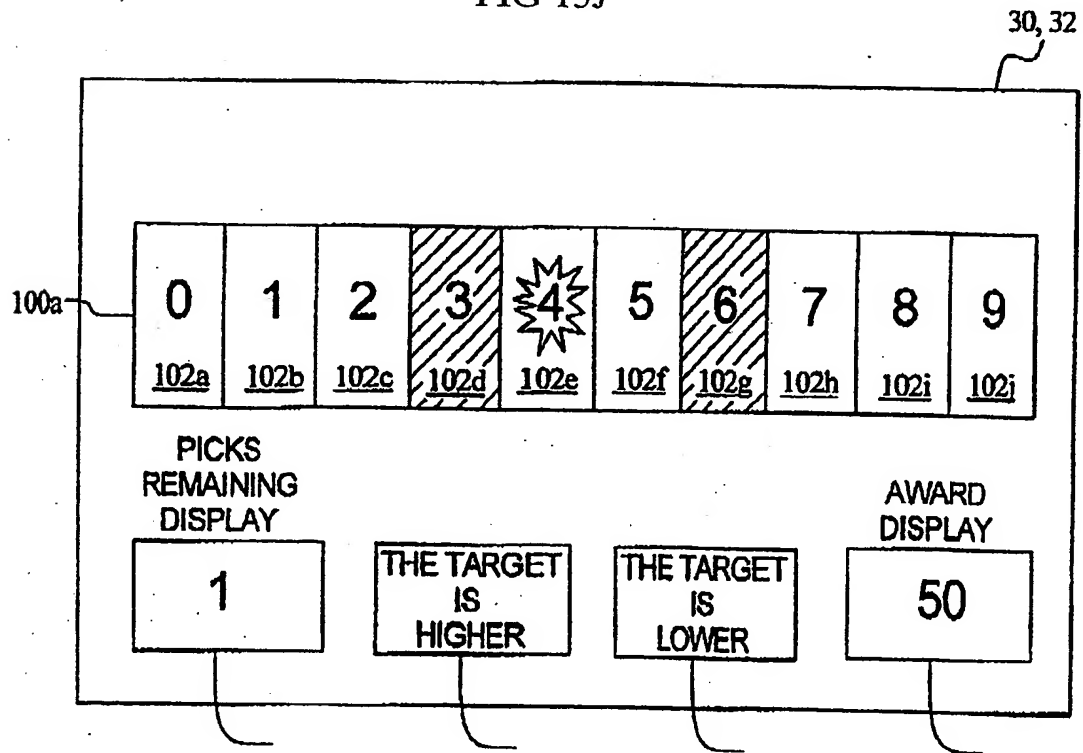


FIG 15K

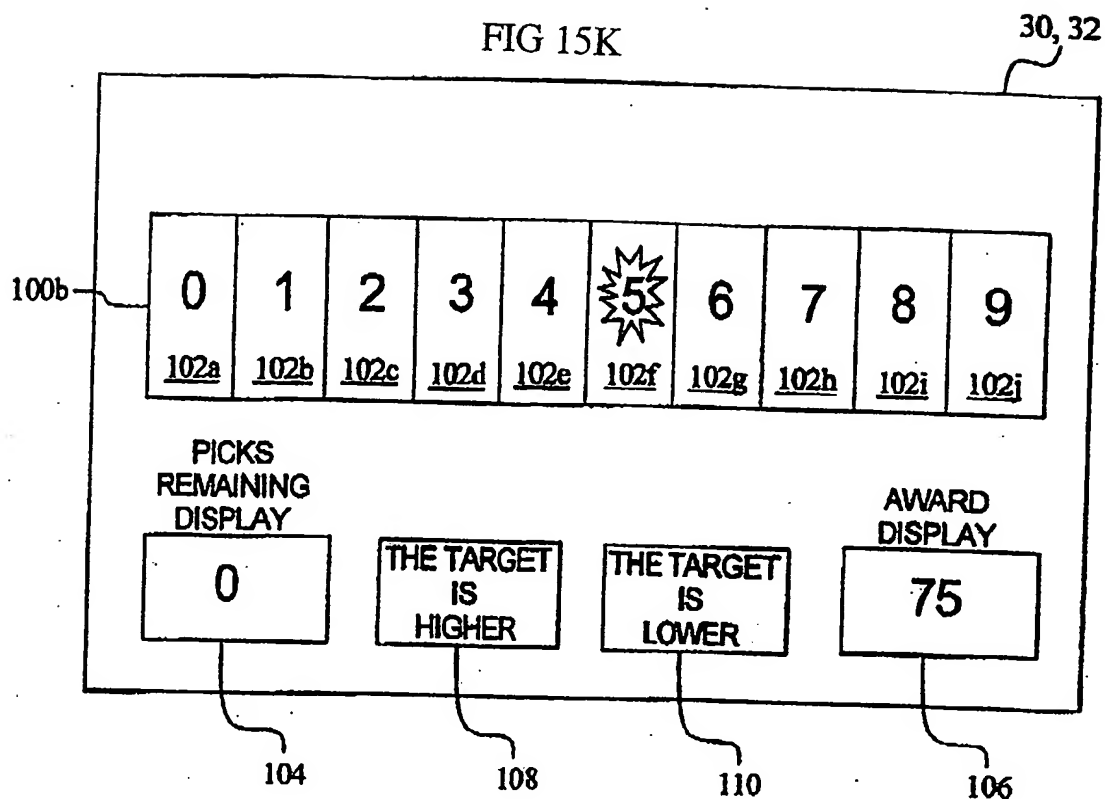


FIG 16

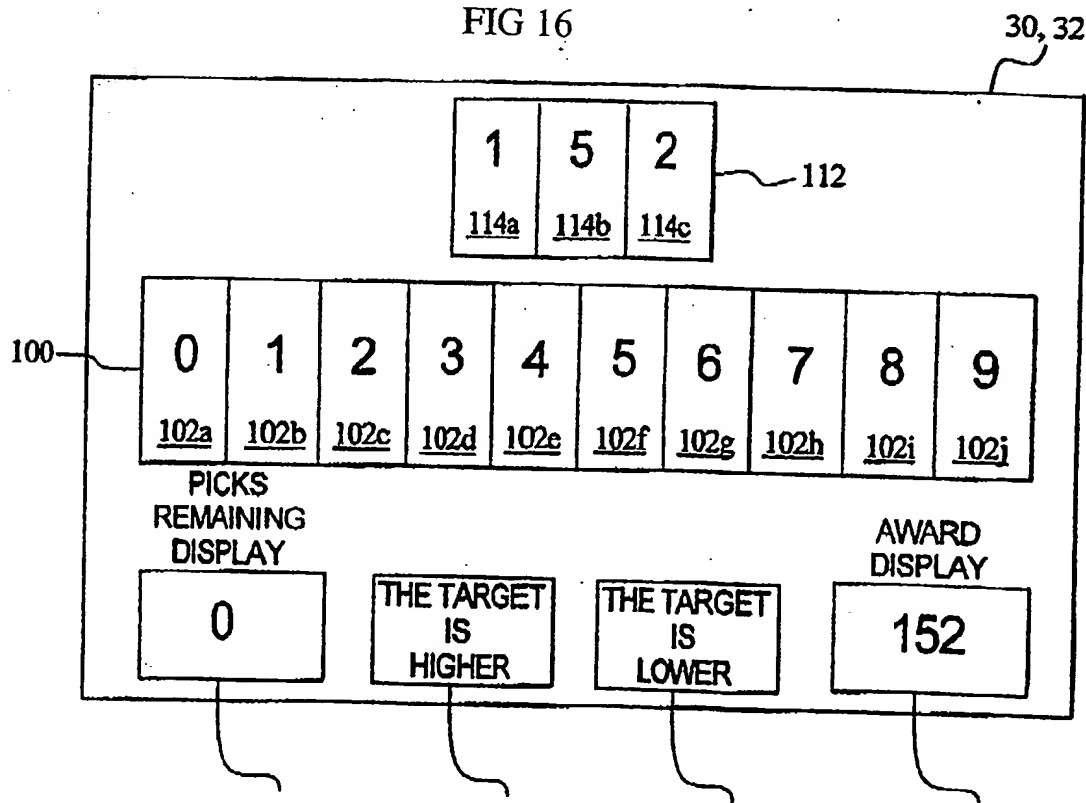


FIG 17

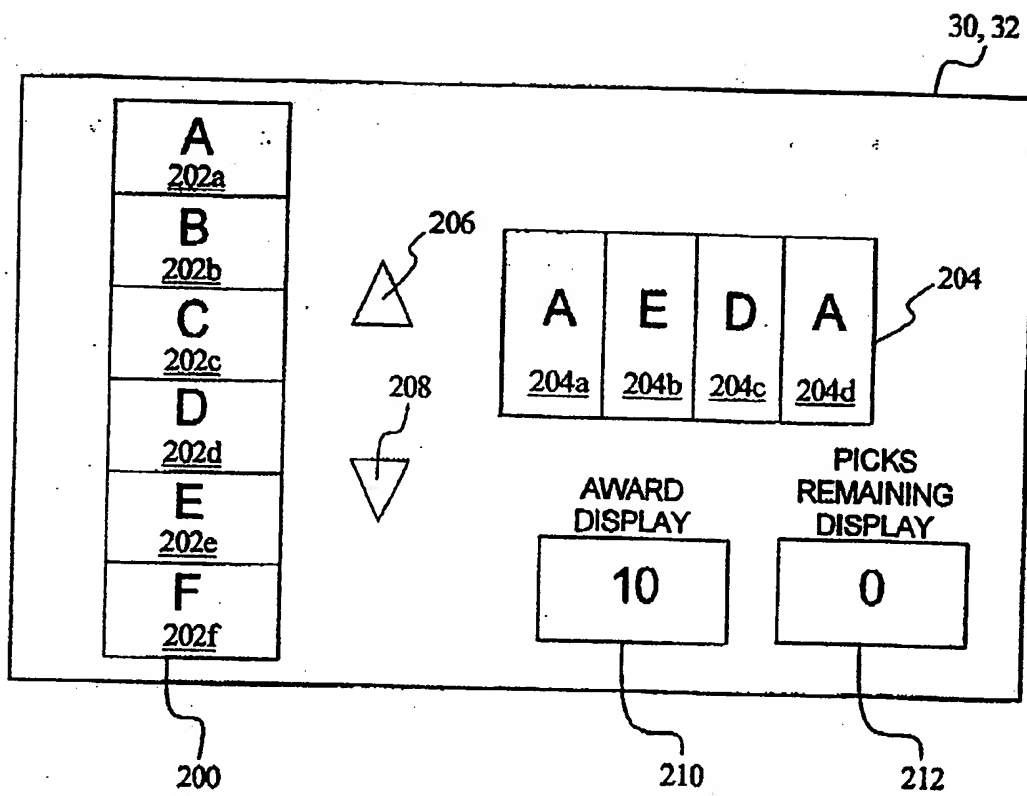
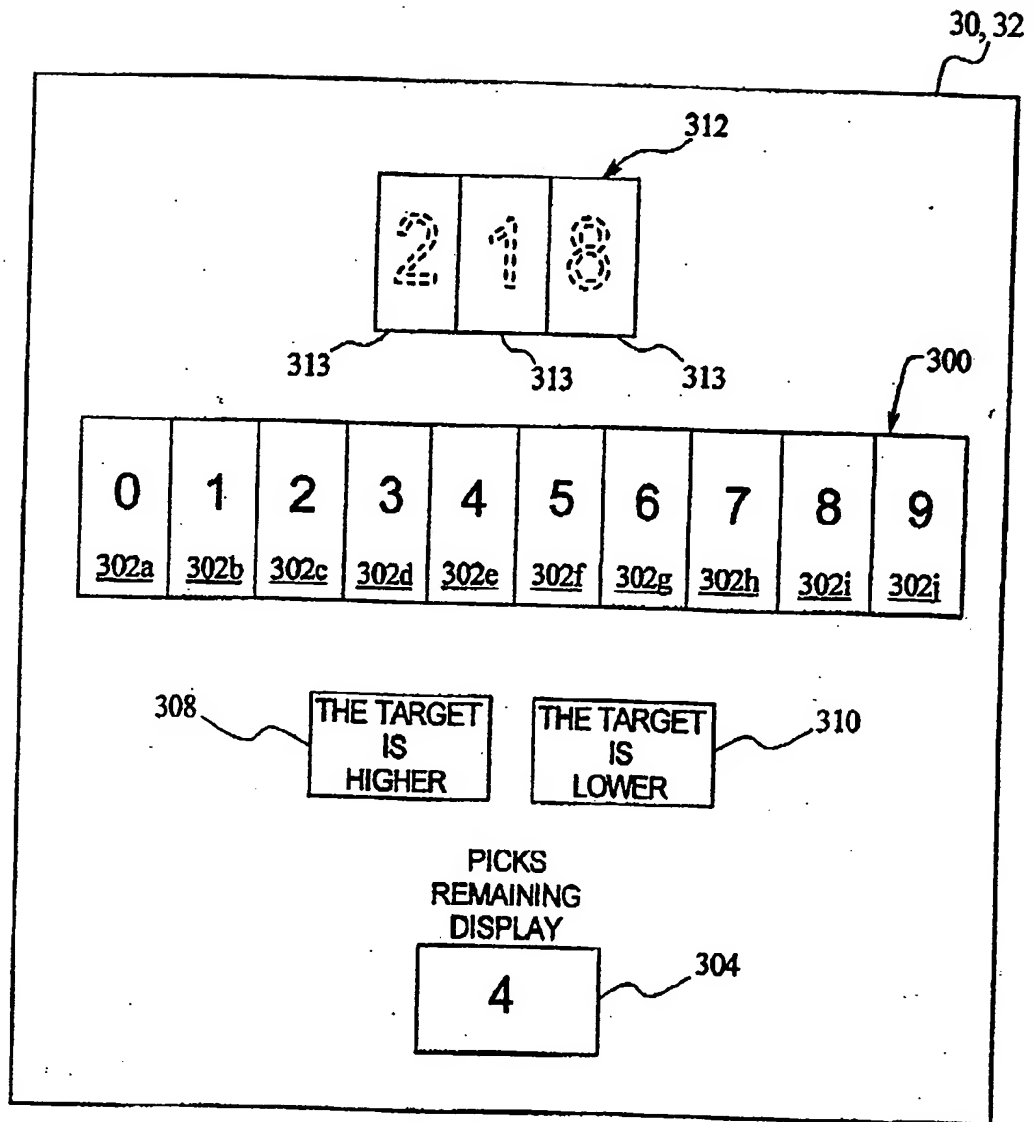


FIG 18



5

10 "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A PICK REDUCTION GAME"

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims priority from U.S. Patent Application No. 10/071,138, filed on February 8, 2002
15 entitled "Gaming Device Having a Related Symbol Selection Game," the specification of which is hereby included as Annex A to the description. The contents of Annex A and the Figures referred to therein forms part of the disclosure of the present invention.

20

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a gaming device having a pick reduction game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming
25 devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one known
30 method for enhancing player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the operation of the base game of the gaming device. The triggering event

temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the secondary or bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.

5 Bonus games exist that include reels having target symbols or target symbol combinations where the player receives a bonus award for obtaining the particular target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The bonus award may be a predetermined award or a random
10 award. In some bonus games, the bonus award is modified based on the number of attempts used by the player to obtain the target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The modified bonus award is provided to the player once the player obtains the target symbol or target
15 symbol combination on the reels.

One such bonus game is described in U.S. Patent No. 6,231,445, which is assigned to Acres Gaming, Inc. In this patent, several gaming machines having a plurality of reels are interconnected over a gaming network. Each of
20 the gaming machines displays a plurality of reels having various symbols to the player in a primary or base game. If the player obtains a predetermined winning combination of symbols on the reels after a spin, a bonus game is triggered and a bonus award is provided to start the bonus
25 game. In the bonus game, the bonus award immediately decreases after the first spin of the reels. Subsequently, the bonus award continues to decrease after each spin until the player obtains one of the winning symbols or winning symbol combinations on the reels. The player then
30 receives the modified bonus award.

Gaming devices that increase the opportunities to obtain awards and increase the size of the awards are desirable. Players are attracted to games that provide

several larger awards and the opportunity to obtain a very large award. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new games for gaming devices.

5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a gaming device having a pick reduction game and specifically, a bonus game. In one embodiment, primarily discussed herein, the gaming device displays a plurality of first selections, which are masked or hidden, to the player. Additionally, the gaming device displays a number of picks to the player. The number of picks is preferably greater than the number of first selections. However, in another embodiment, the number of picks may be equal to or less than the number of first selections.

The player uses the picks to pick selections from the plurality of first selections until the player picks a trigger selection. The number of picks are reduced by each pick by the player. Once the player obtains the trigger selection, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections to the player. The first and second selections may be displayed separately on the same display device or on different display devices, or the second selections may replace the first selections on the same display device. The player uses the remaining number of picks to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The plurality of second selections are associated with awards. Initially, the awards are masked or hidden from the player and an award is revealed after the player picks the second selection associated with that award. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's last pick or the player runs

out of picks before picking the trigger selection, the player receives a consolation award. In another embodiment such as in a primary game, the player does not receive any awards and the game ends.

5 In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with additional picks to choose second selections in the game. If the player has picks remaining after picking the trigger selection, the player also receives the additional picks to choose second selections
10 to receive extra awards. If the player does not have any picks remaining, the player just receives the additional picks and thereby has the minimum number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. In this embodiment, the player receives at least a minimum number of picks to
15 pick second selections and obtain awards in the bonus game.

The player's goal is to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections as quickly as possible so that the player has the maximum number of
20 picks to use to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The player uses the picks to choose second selections from the plurality of second selections and accumulates the awards associated with each of the second selections picked by the player. The total
25 accumulated award obtained by the player when the player has no picks remaining is the award provided to the player at the end of the bonus game. In one embodiment, the awards include at least one relatively large award. In this manner, the player still has an opportunity to obtain
30 the relatively large award, even if the player has only one pick to use to choose selections from the plurality of second selections.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a

bonus symbol is associated with one or more of the plurality of first selections and/or one or more of the plurality of second selections. The bonus symbol provides the player with a predetermined or random number of additional picks in the bonus game. The player may use the additional picks to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections and thereby receive more picks to choose selections from the plurality of second selections. Additionally, if the player picks the bonus symbol from the plurality of second selections, the player obtains additional picks and thereby receives more awards and possibly, a relatively large award. In a further embodiment, at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

In a further embodiment, relationship indicators are displayed to the player and associated with the plurality of first selections. In one embodiment, the relationship indicators automatically indicate the location or relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the player's last selection or pick from the plurality of first selections. In another embodiment, the player may choose to receive a "hint" by pressing a button or selector and use the relationship indicators to indicate the relative location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections. If the player chooses to use the "hint" and thereby the relationship indicators, the player in one embodiment will lose one or more picks to obtain this advantage. Otherwise, the player does not have to use the relationship indicators and may proceed as described above.

In still a further embodiment, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections, and the plurality of second selections displayed to the player by the gaming

device are displayed in various shapes, characters or symbols. Preferably, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections are designated with symbols or characters that are
5 associated with the theme of the game.

In an alternative embodiment, the first selections are displayed on a mechanical display. The selections on the mechanical display are covered by movable revealing members such as mechanical doors that move such as by
10 raising and lowering over the selections to reveal or hide the selections, respectively. In one aspect of this embodiment, the selections are displayed on a video display device and the mechanical doors slide over the display device. In another aspect of this embodiment, the
15 mechanical doors slide over mechanical reels, which spin to indicate one or more trigger selections.

In another alternative embodiment, a plurality of sets of first selections are displayed to a player. Each set includes at least one trigger selection.
20 Additionally, a picks remaining display is associated with each of the sets of first selections where a number of picks is indicated in each picks remaining display. The player uses the picks to pick first selections in each of the sets. The player continues to pick first selections
25 in each of the sets until the player picks the trigger selection in one or more of the sets or until there are no picks remaining in the sets. The number of picks indicated in each picks remaining display after the player is finished picking selections, is summed or totaled to
30 provide the player with a total number of picks remaining for the set of seconds selections. The player uses the total number of picks to choose second selections to obtain awards. Alternatively, the player must pick the

trigger in each set of first selections to get to the set of second selections. In further alternative embodiments, the player must pick the trigger selection in at least two of the sets of first selections, in one or more
5 specific sets, or in any desired combination of sets.

Although the present invention is primarily discussed relative to the bonus game of a gaming device, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

10 It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a pick reduction game that provides an opportunity for a player to obtain a large award.

Another advantage of the present invention is to
15 provide larger awards to players that increase player excitement and entertainment.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying
20 sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a front perspective view of one embodiment
25 of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 1B is a front perspective of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of
30 the present invention.

Figs. 3A and 3B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating one embodiment of the present invention.

Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first four picks by a player from a plurality of first selections where the player chooses the trigger selection with the player's final pick in the game.

Figs. 4F and 4G are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first and only pick by a player from a plurality of second selections where the player picks the relatively large award.

Figs. 5A and 5B are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections include a bonus symbol.

Fig. 6 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention where the bonus game includes relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Fig. 7 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the player has an option of using the relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Figs. 8A and 8B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the picks remaining display, plurality of first selections, and plurality of second selections are designated by different symbols.

Figs. 9A is an enlarged front elevation view of one

of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein mechanical doors cover the first selections and move or slide up and down to hide and reveal the first selections.

5 Fig. 9B is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the mechanical doors of Fig. 9A cover mechanical reels that display the first selections.

10 Fig. 10 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention wherein multiple sets of first selections are displayed to a player.

15 Figs. 11A, 11B, 12-14, 15A-15K and 16 to 18 are described in Annex A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

20 Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10.

25 Gaming device 10 in one embodiment has the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted in a cabinet. However, it should be appreciated
30 that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display

designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming
5 device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game
10 such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, and any of the bonus triggering events and bonus games associated with these primary games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

15 As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be
20 used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of
25 money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also
30 includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player

pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. Other bet or wager indicators such as a bet max button may
5 also be employed in the gaming device of present invention.

A player may cash out and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player cashes out,
10 the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

15 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. Gaming device 10 in
20 one embodiment displays a plurality of reels 34 such as three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not
25 limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video
30 form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor. Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably

correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for producing sounds such as music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. One or more secondary processors may also be employed in conjunction with the primary processor to control certain aspects of the game function. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen

50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money
5 in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific
10 integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to
15 provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40
20 are generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10, in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12
25 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop,
30 the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, in one embodiment gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of

gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begins a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use mechanical devices or a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. In one embodiment, the qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 initiates the secondary or bonus game of the present invention. Referring now to Figs. 3A and 3B, the bonus game includes a plurality of first selections 100 and a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of first selections or first selection set 100 includes at least two masked first selections 102. In Fig. 3A, there are four masked first selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. At least one trigger selection 102c is associated with one of the masked selections 102. The trigger selection may be designated with any symbol or character preferred by the game implementor to indicate that a particular selection is the trigger selection. A number of picks is associated with the plurality of first selections 100, as indicated

by the picks remaining display 104. Once the bonus game is initiated, the gaming device displays the plurality of first selections 100 and a number of picks in the picks remaining display 104.

5 In one embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is at least one less than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. Accordingly, the player will always have at least one remaining pick after
10 obtaining the trigger selection to choose at least one of the second selections. Therefore, the player will always have an opportunity or chance to obtain the relatively large award associated with the second selection even though the probability of obtaining that award is lower
15 than if the player has a larger number of picks.

In another embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is equal to or greater than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. In this
20 embodiment, the player may obtain the trigger selection with the player's last pick or run out of picks before picking the trigger selection. In either case, the player does not have any picks remaining in the game and therefore, the player cannot pick from the plurality of
25 second selections. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's final pick or the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger selection in the bonus game, the player receives a consolation award and the bonus game ends. The consolation
30 award may be any award including, but not limited to, free spins, free games, multipliers and credits. In another embodiment, the game ends and the player does not receive any awards in the game. This game may be best suited for

a primary game where the player does not necessarily obtain an award in each game as is typical in bonus games. In such primary games a wager would be placed on the set of first selections. The amount of the wager could also
5 determine the number of picks in the first selections and/or additional picks in the second selections. Additionally, the amount of the wager could determine the number of sets of first selections provided to the player in the game. Varying the number of trigger selections
10 and/or the number of first selection sets varies the probability that the player will initiate the bonus game and thereby increases the players excitement and enjoyment of the game. It should also be appreciated that the number of first selections and the number of picks may
15 vary in a game.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with an additional number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. If the player picks the trigger selection before running out of picks in the
20 primary game, the player will also receive additional picks to choose second selections to obtain extra awards in the bonus game. If the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection in the primary game, the player receives only the additional picks and thus,
25 still has a minimum number of picks to choose second selections.

In a bonus game, the player uses the picks provided to the player by the gaming device to pick selections from the plurality of first selections 100. The player
30 continues to pick one of the selections 102 from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c. Once the player picks the trigger selection 102c, the gaming device displays a

plurality of second selections 200 to the player. In one embodiment, the second selections are displayed separately from the first selections on the same display device or on different display devices. In another embodiment, the
5 second selections replace the first selections on the same display device.

The player receives the number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 after the player picks the trigger selection 102c. In this example, the player
10 receives the maximum number of picks possible, which is one less than the number of picks provided to the player at the beginning of the game, if the player selects the trigger selection with the player's first pick. In any event, the player receives at least one pick if the player
15 selects or picks the trigger selection 102c with the final pick.

In Fig. 3B, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200 that include several selections 202a to 202l. Each selection 202 is associated with an award
20 203. Initially, all of the awards 203 are masked or hidden from the player. Once the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200, the award 203 that is associated with the picked selection is revealed or shown to the player. In
25 one embodiment, the awards 203 include a plurality of relatively small awards and one relatively large award. In Fig. 3B, the relatively large award is illustrated in selection 202k, which includes an award of five thousand. It should be appreciated that the awards 203 associated
30 with the selections 202 may include a plurality of relatively small awards, a plurality of relatively large awards, or any combination therein. Additionally, the number of selections 202 in the plurality of second

selections 200 may include any number of selections as desired by the game implementor. In one embodiment, the number of selections 202 and the plurality of second selections 200 is equal to or greater than the number of first selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100. It should be appreciated that the number of first selections 100 and the number of second selections 200 may include the same number or a different number of selections.

10 A picks remaining display 204 initially indicates the number of picks transferred from the picks remaining display 104 that the player received by picking the trigger selection 102c. In one embodiment, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 reduces
15 by one each time the player picks a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. In other embodiments, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 decreases or increases by a predetermined or random number of picks. The total award display 206
20 indicates the accumulated award received by the player based on the awards that are revealed after each pick of a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200 by the player. The total award indicated by the total award display 206 when the player runs out of picks is the
25 total award provided to the player for that game.

Referring now to Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E, an example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device displays four selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d in a plurality of
30 first selections 100 to the player. As shown in Fig. 4A, the gaming device provides the player with five picks, as indicated by the picks remaining display 104, to begin the game. Thus, the player may receive a maximum of four

picks if the player obtains or picks the trigger selection with the player's first pick in the game. The minimum number of picks that the player can receive is one pick where the player picks the trigger selection with the
5 final pick in the game.

In Fig. 4B, the player picks selection 102c with the first pick in the bonus game. The selection 102c is not the trigger selection, however, and therefore the player must make another pick from the plurality of first
10 selections 100. The number of picks is reduced by one, from five to four.

Referring to Fig. 4C, the player now has four picks left in the game as indicated by the picks remaining display 104. Therefore, if the player picks the trigger
15 selection with this pick, the player will receive three picks to use when choosing selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. The player picks selection 102a with the second pick. Unfortunately, the selection 102a is not the trigger selection. The number
20 of picks is reduced by one, from four to three, and the player must make another pick from the plurality of first selections 100.

In Fig. 4D, the player picks again from the plurality of first selections 100 in the bonus game. With the third
25 pick, the player picks selection 102d from the plurality of first selections 100. The selection 102d is still not the trigger selection. Therefore, the number of picks is reduced by one again, from three to two, and now there is only one selection 102b remaining in the plurality of
30 first selections 100.

In one embodiment, the trigger selection 102b, which is the only remaining selection available to the player, is revealed to the player automatically. Thus, the player

receives the minimum number of picks which, in this example, is one, to pick selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Even though the player received the minimum number of picks, one, the player still has an opportunity to pick or receive a relatively large award in the bonus game. Therefore, the probability that the player will pick the relatively large award with only one pick is less than if the player had more picks remaining. However, the player still has a slight probability or chance to pick the relatively large award, which creates player excitement.

Referring to Fig. 4E, the player automatically receives the trigger selection 102b as described above. Thus, the player has one pick to use to pick a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Once the player obtains the trigger selection 102b, the gaming device displays the plurality of second selections 200 to the player and also transfers the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 104 to the picks remaining display 204, which is associated with the plurality of second selections 200.

Referring now to Figs. 4F and 4G, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of awards 203 (not shown) are associated with the second selections 200. The awards are initially masked to the player and are revealed when the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of selections 200. In Fig. 4F, the player uses the player's only pick to pick selection 202d from the plurality of second selections 200. Fortunately, the player picks the selection associated with the relatively large award of five thousand. The player does not have any picks remaining and therefore the bonus game ends. However, the

player did pick and obtain the largest single award of five thousand in the bonus game. This award is transferred to the total award display 206 and is provided to the player because the bonus game has ended.

5 This example illustrates how the present invention maintains the level of excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game by enabling players to always have a chance or opportunity of obtaining the relatively large award or the single largest award in the game. After the bonus game
10 begins, the player's odds or chances for obtaining the relatively large award decrease after each pick by the player from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player obtains the trigger selection. However, the player still has a slight probability or chance of
15 obtaining the relatively large award even though the player may have only one pick to choose one of the second selections 200. Thus, the odds of obtaining the relatively large award in the bonus game decrease, but never reach zero, and thereby players always have a chance
20 to obtain the relatively large award.

Referring now to Figs. 5A and 5B, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where a bonus symbol 106 is associated with at least one of the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100.
25 In one embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more additional picks to the player if the player picks the selection 102 associated with the bonus symbol 106. In another embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more multipliers to the player.

30 In Fig. 5A, the bonus symbol is designated by a star. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol may be any symbol, character, or shape as desired by the game implementor. Also, the bonus symbol may provide the

player with additional picks, a multiplier which multiplies the present number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 or modifies the picks in some other suitable manner. The bonus symbol may also be
5 associated with at least one of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200 wherein the bonus symbol may provide additional picks, multipliers or other modifiers to the player.

In Fig. 5B, the bonus symbol 208 is associated with
10 selection 202f. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol 208 may be associated with one or more of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200. In one embodiment, the bonus symbol 208 provides an additional pick to the player from the plurality of second
15 selections 200 when the player picks the selection 202 associated with the bonus symbol 208. The bonus symbol, therefore, enables the player to obtain additional picks in the bonus game and potentially receive extra awards and larger awards in the bonus game. In a further embodiment,
20 at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

Referring now to Fig. 6, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the plurality of
25 first selections are arranged in a column. Two relationship indicators, designated as an upward facing arrow 106a and a downward facing arrow 106b, indicate the relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the selection picked by the player. For example, if the
30 trigger selection is selection 102a and the player picks selection 102c, the gaming device illuminates or highlights the relationship indicator 106a to indicate that the trigger selection is higher than or above the

picked selection 102c. Likewise, if the trigger selection is lower or below the picked selection 102c, the relationship indicator or downward facing arrow 106b is illuminated or highlighted by the gaming device. The
5 relationship indicators enable the player to identify the relative location of the trigger selection more quickly and therefore enables the player to potentially receive more picks to use for picking selections from the plurality of second selections 200 (not shown).

10 Referring to Fig. 7, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the relationship indicators 110a and 110b indicate whether the target is higher or the target is lower than a picked selection, respectively. It should be appreciated that the
15 relationship indicators 110a and 110b may include words, phrases, characters or other designations that indicate the relationship of the trigger selection to the picked selection by the player.

In this embodiment, a player selectable button or
20 selector 108 is also displayed to the player. The button or selector 108 is designated with the question "HINT?" to enable the player to choose whether they want to receive an indication of the location of the trigger selection. If the player decides to receive a hint from the gaming
25 device about the location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections 100, the player presses or selects the button or selector 108. Then, one of the relationship indicators 110a or 110b is illuminated or highlighted to indicate the relationship of the trigger
30 selection to the last picked selection by the player.

In one embodiment, the gaming device deducts one or more picks from the player's total picks for providing the player with a hint or indication of the relative location

of the trigger selection. In this manner, the player may use the relationship indicators to try to obtain the trigger selection more quickly. However, if the player does not obtain the trigger selection after receiving the
5 hint, the player sacrifices additional picks. The player may opt not to receive any hints in the bonus game and proceed with selecting the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 as described above. The hint button or selector 108 give the player the opportunity to
10 receive more picks than the player might receive if the player picked the selections without any hints.

Referring now to Figs. 8A and 8B, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the number of picks, the plurality of first selections 100
15 and the plurality of second selections 200 are displayed as different shapes or symbols. This embodiment shows that the number of picks 105 may be a number displayed in a display such as the picks remaining display 104 illustrated in Figs. 3A to 7, a number as shown in
20 Fig. 8A, or some other designation as desired by the game implementor. In Fig. 8A, the gaming device highlights or illuminates the remaining number of picks in the bonus game at any given time in the bonus game. Additionally, the plurality of first selections 100 and the plurality of
25 second selections 200 may be any shape, character, symbol or other designation as desired.

In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Figs. 9A and 9B, the first selections 100 are displayed on a mechanical display. In Fig. 9A, the trigger selection is
30 displayed on a display device such as a video display device and mechanical doors 208 cover the display device. Each selection 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d is covered by a mechanical door 208, which moves or slides up and down to

reveal or hide the selections, respectively. The doors 208 move or slide within channels (not shown) or similar devices that are connected to the gaming device. After the player picks a selection, such as selection 102c, the door 208 associated with that selection slides upward or opens to reveal that selection. Once the player picks the trigger selection or when the player runs out of picks, any doors 208 that are in the open or upward position, drop down to cover or hide the selections.

10 In Fig. 9B, the doors 208 cover mechanical reels 34, which include a plurality of symbols having the trigger selection. Initially, the doors 208 are closed or cover the reels 34. The gaming device spins or activates the reels 34. Once the reels stop spinning, one or more
15 symbols are indicated on the reels where one of the symbols represents the trigger selection. The player picks the selections 102 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c or until the player runs out of picks. The doors 208 move upward, or open, to reveal the
20 selections 102 after the player picks the selections, and close or lower when the game ends as described above. It should be appreciated that any suitable covering or revealing panel or member could be employed to reveal the selections.

25 In another alternative embodiment illustrated in Fig. 10, several sets of first selections 100a, 100b and 100c are displayed to the player in the bonus game. Additionally, the sets of first selections are associated with picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c. In
30 this illustration, the first set of first selections 100a includes selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. The second set of first selections 100b includes selections 102e, 102f, 102g and 102h. The third set of first selections

includes selections 102i, 102j, 102k and 102l. It should be appreciated that any number of selection sets 100 and associated picks remaining displays 104 may be displayed to the player. It should also be appreciated that any
5 number of selections 102 may be included in the selection sets 100.

In this alternative embodiment, the selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 are initially masked or hidden from the player. Each picks remaining display
10 104a, 104b and 104c indicates a number of picks to be used to choose selections in the associated selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c. It should be appreciated that the picks remaining displays 104 may indicate the same number of picks, a different number of picks or any combination
15 therein. The player picks selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102b, 102h and 102i in each of the selection sets, or until the player runs out of picks for one or more of the selection sets. In one embodiment, the number
20 of picks remaining for each of the selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c is indicated in the corresponding picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c, after the player is finished picking selections in the selection sets, is summed or totaled and indicated in the total picks
25 remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that the individual number of picks associated with each set of first selections may be added, multiplied or combined in any manner as desired to achieve the total number of picks remaining in the game.

30 The total number of picks indicated in total picks remaining display 210 is the number of picks provided to the player to choose second selections to obtain awards. For example in Fig. 10, the number of picks indicated in

picks remaining display 104a is two, the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104b is zero and the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104c is one. Therefore, the total number of picks available to the player to pick second selections in the game is three, as indicated by the total picks remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that other suitable methods may be used with the plurality of first selections sets to obtain picks in the second selection sets. For example in one embodiment, the player must pick the trigger selection in all of the first selection sets to obtain picks for the second selections. Similarly, in other embodiments, the player must pick at least two of the trigger selections, specific trigger selections or any combination therein to obtain picks for the second selections.

While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.

ANNEX A

GAMING DEVICE HAVING A RELATED SYMBOL SELECTION GAME

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming
10 devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one way to
15 enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having a secondary or bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the base game operation of the gaming device. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts further base game play
20 and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives a bonus award, and returns to the base game.

Currently, gaming machines or devices such as slot
25 machines provide bonus games wherein a player has one or more opportunities to select one or more symbols from a plurality of possible symbols. If the player selects one of the designated winning symbols or a winning combination of symbols, the game awards the player a bonus value such
30 as credits. The outcome depends upon the particular symbol or symbols obtained by the player. If the player selects a terminating symbol, the game ends.

One known gaming device is the SPELLBINDER™ gaming

device. For the bonus game of the SPELLBINDER™ gaming device, the gaming device displays the numbers one to twelve to a player. The gaming device selects one of the numbers from the set of numbers. The gaming device
5 requires the player to input whether the player believes that the next number will be higher or lower than the selected number. If the player picked correctly, the gaming device provides an award to the player and repeats the process. If the player does not pick correctly, the
10 bonus game ends.

Other various bonus games have been associated with gaming machines. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new bonus games for gaming machines.

15

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device and in particular a secondary or bonus game of a gaming device that includes at least one target set. The target set has
20 a plurality of symbols including at least one symbol which is randomly designated to be the target symbol. The gaming device enables a player to pick symbols from the target set until the player selects the target symbol or runs out of picks. In one embodiment, the player receives
25 a predetermined number of picks when the game begins. After the player picks a symbol, a relationship indicator identifies the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. If the picked symbol is not (or does not match) the target symbol, the
30 relationship indicator indicates the relationship of the target symbol to the picked symbol. The player continues to pick symbols from the target set until the player obtains the target symbol or runs out of picks.

Preferably, the player receives an award for picking the randomly designated target symbol. It should be appreciated that the number of or type of target symbols in each target set may vary. Also, the target symbols may
5 be the same symbols, different symbols or any combination of symbols in each bonus game.

In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a plurality of target sets and provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in each set. In one
10 embodiment, the player has a total cumulative number of picks the player can use in selecting symbols in all of the target sets. Each target symbol is associated with an award and the player's total award is based on the sum of the individual awards for each picked target symbol. It
15 should also be appreciated that the processor or controller of the gaming device could randomly determine the awards for the target symbols. In accord with one aspect of the invention, each award is associated with a probability of being associated with a target symbol such
20 that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to the player based on the target symbols picked by the player. In one such embodiment, the symbols in each
25 target set are numbers, such as the integers from zero to nine, and the target symbol is one of the numbers. When the player picks the target number, the gaming device uses the picked target number to determine the player's award. In one embodiment, the player receives the sum of the
30 awards associated with each picked target symbol in a target set or sets. In an alternative embodiment, the player could receive an award or combined award based on completing an award combination. In this alternative

embodiment, the award or combined award is a combination of the target numbers. The combination is formed by placing the target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked or alternatively, 5 in another suitable order. Each picked target number makes up a digit of the combined award. If the player picks several target numbers, the player's award is an order of the digits of the target numbers.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides 10 the player with a number of picks. The gaming device also displays a masked combination of target numbers. The combination is formed by randomly selecting and placing target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked by the processor or in 15 another suitable order. The combination may also be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number makes up a digit in the combination. If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award to the 20 player. The award in one embodiment is based on the number of picks that the player has remaining. In one alternative embodiment, the player uses the player's remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another 25 bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards.

In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target symbols in a target 30 combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target

symbol combination.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the gaming device increases because the player does not know when the player's picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

Although the present invention is discussed relative to a bonus game of a gaming machine, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

20

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 11A is front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 11B is front perspective view of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 12 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 13 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B, which illustrates one embodiment of the present invention where the symbols in the target set are numbers.

Fig. 14 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of the

present invention implemented in a bonus game.

Figs. 15A and 15B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by a player in a target set and
5 the response by the gaming device.

Figs. 15C and 15D are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by a player in the target set and the response by the gaming device.

10 Fig. 15E is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by a player in the target set, which is the target symbol, and an award associated with the target symbol.

15 Figs. 15F and 15G are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by the player in a new target set, which is the fourth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

20 Figs. 15H and 15I are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by the player in the target set, which is the fifth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

25 Fig. 15J is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by the player in the target set, which is the sixth overall pick in the bonus game, that results in a second target symbol and an award.

30 Fig. 15K is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick in a new target set, which is the seventh overall and final selection in the bonus game, that

results in a third target symbol and an award.

Fig. 16 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the bonus game award equals the value of a target symbol combination.

Fig. 17 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 18 is an enlarged front elevation view of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention wherein the bonus game includes a target symbol combination.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 is in one embodiment a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted on a console or cabinet. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 11A and 11B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a

detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other storage or memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop
5 personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of their bonus games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be
10 in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

As illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket
15 vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit
20 display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

25 As shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player
30 pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. The gaming device can also include other conventional

wagoring indicators such as a bet max button

A player may "cash out" and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player "cashes
5 out," the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

10 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 11A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 11B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. The illustrated
15 gaming device 10 displays a plurality of reels 34 (i.e., five reels 34) in video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of
20 physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display
25 device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor.

Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated
30 with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 12, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38

and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or individually referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 is generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 11A, 11B and 12, to operate the gaming device 10 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. In the slot embodiment, the reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, gaming device 10 may also give players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use a video-based central display

device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. The qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 automatically initiates the bonus game of the present invention.

Referring to Fig. 13, one embodiment of the display device 30 or 32 of the present invention is illustrated. The display device 30 or 32 displays a target set 100 including a plurality of player selectable symbols 102a to 102j (generally referred to as symbols 102). At least one of the symbols 102 in the target set 100 is randomly determined by the processor as the target symbol for each play of the bonus game. Although this embodiment shows one target set, it should be appreciated that in other embodiments, a bonus game may include multiple target sets. In such an embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick a symbol in each target set. The gaming device provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in the target sets.

In the illustrated embodiment, the symbols are numbers and particularly integers from zero to nine. The symbols, however, may be any suitable symbols as desired.

Also, the numbers are preferably displayed in sequential order starting with the lowest value on the left to the highest value on the right. It should be appreciated that any logical order may be displayed to a player based on
5 the symbols being used in the bonus game. The order of the symbols (i.e., zero to nine) in this embodiment illustrates the relationship of the symbols to one another.

The display device includes a picks remaining display
10 104, an award display 106 and relationship indicators 108 and 110.

The picks remaining display 104 indicates the number of picks that are remaining in a bonus game. At the start of a game, the gaming device determines the total number
15 of picks for that bonus game and displays the number of picks in the picks remaining display 104. The picks remaining display 104 decreases by one after each pick by a player. Thus, at any point in the game, the player knows how many picks are remaining in that game and may
20 adjust the player's strategy accordingly. When the picks remaining display indicates that there are no picks remaining in a game, the bonus game ends.

The award display 106 indicates the total award received by a player in the bonus game. During a bonus
25 game, any awards received by a player are added to the award indicated by the award display 106. Once a bonus game ends, the total award indicated by the award display 106 is provided to the player.

30 The relationship indicators 108 and 110, indicate the relationship between a picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. In the illustrated embodiment in Fig. 13, the target set 100 includes ten symbols 102a to 102j,

designated with the numbers zero through nine. Since the target set includes numbers, the relationship indicators 108 or 110 indicate whether a target number is higher or lower than a picked number in a target set. If the target number is higher than a picked number, the relationship indicator 108 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this relationship to the player. If the target number is lower than a picked number, the relationship indicator 110 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this relationship to the player. It should be appreciated that the relationship indicators 108 and 110 may indicate any relationship between a target symbol and a picked symbol. Although there are two relationship indicators in this illustration, a gaming device may have one or more relationship indicators as desired by the game implementor.

One embodiment of the bonus game of the present invention which includes multiple target sets operates according to the flow diagram in Fig. 14. The gaming device initiates a bonus game as indicated by block 112. Initially, a player receives a predetermined number of picks to start a bonus game as indicated by block 113. However, it should be appreciated that the number of picks may be randomly determined or be any number desired by the implementor. By limiting the number of picks, the chances of obtaining multiple target symbols and thereby multiple awards in this embodiment with multiple target sets becomes more difficult. Therefore, a player is challenged to obtain as many target symbols as possible before running out of picks in the bonus game. Such a challenge adds to a player's excitement and enjoyment of the game.

The gaming device then selects and displays a target set including a plurality of symbols as indicated by block

114. In one embodiment, the game displays a plurality of numbers ranging from 0 to 9. While numbers are discussed, it should be appreciated that any symbols are contemplated, including letters A to Z, signs of the Zodiac, months of the year, characters, city names, state names, etc. It is preferred that the symbols are orderly arranged such as in a sequential order in displayed the target set.

The game determines one symbol to be the target symbol in the target set as indicated by block 116. Preferably, the target symbol is randomly determined, however it should be appreciated that a target symbol may be a predetermined symbol in the target set. The target symbol is not displayed to the player until the player picks the target symbol in the target set.

Next, the gaming device prompts the player to select a symbol from the target set as indicated by block 118, which the player believes may be the target symbol in the target set. The prompt may be a statement or message displayed on the display device 30 or 32, or it may be a cursor that flashes and notifies the player to select another symbol. It should be appreciated that the prompt may be any type of prompt initiated by the gaming device 10.

Once the player picks a symbol, the gaming device 10 completes a series of decisions as illustrated by the decision diamonds in the flow diagram of Fig. 14. The processor of the gaming device 10 first determines if the picked symbol is a target symbol as indicated by decision diamond 122. The processor of the gaming device compares the picked symbol to the predetermined target symbol in the target set.

If the picked symbol is the target symbol, the gaming

device highlights the target symbol in some manner to notify the player that the player picked the target symbol in the target set. It should be appreciated that the target symbol may be highlighted by illuminating it, 5 changing the color of the target symbol or by any other desired method. The gaming device then provides the player with an award as indicated by block 126. In the embodiment where there is only one target set in the game, the bonus game ends. In the embodiment where there are 10 several target sets in a bonus game, the processor of the gaming device 10 must determine if the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128b. If there are no picks remaining in the game, the game ends as indicated by oval 130. The player 15 receives the total award for that bonus game.

The player receives an award for each picked target symbol. In one embodiment with multiple target sets, the gaming device provides the player with an award associated with a target symbol. However, it is contemplated that 20 the award value may also be randomly generated by the processor 38. In one embodiment of the present invention, the awards associated with the target symbols are associated with probabilities such that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target set 25 or symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to a player based on the order in which the target symbols are picked. In this embodiment, target symbols are preferably numbers and the player's award is the value 30 of the target number itself. When a player picks a target number, the target number is separately displayed on the display device. Any subsequently picked target numbers are displayed in sequential order next to the previously

picked target number or numbers. The player receives the total award designated by the combination of the individual awards from each target symbol. For example, a target set includes the numbers one through nine. A
5 player picks a target number one from a first target set. Then the player picks target number zero from a second target set and target number nine from a third target set. The player's total award for that bonus game is one hundred nine based on the sequential order of the picked
10 target symbols. It should be appreciated that a player may receive the sum of the individual awards, or some other suitable award as desired by the game implementor.

If the player has picks remaining in the bonus game, the gaming device 10 displays a new target set with a
15 plurality of symbols to the player as indicated by block 114. The gaming device determines the target symbol and prompts the player to pick a symbol from the target set as indicated by blocks 116 and 118 respectively. The gaming device then repeats the steps described above starting at
20 block 120.

If the player picks a symbol that is not the target symbol, the gaming device 10 must determine whether the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128a. If the player has
25 picks remaining, the gaming device determines the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol. Once the relationship is determined, the gaming device displays the relationship to the player as indicated by block 124. The gaming device prompts the
30 player to pick another symbol as indicated by block 118. The process described above is repeated until the player picks a target symbol in the target set or the player runs out of picks. If, however, the player does not have any

picks remaining in block 128A, the game ends as indicated by block 130 and the bonus game award total is transferred to the player.

5 Figs. 15A to 15K illustrate an example of one embodiment of the present invention. In this example, the target set symbols are numbers and the player starts out the game with seven picks. Also, the player does not start out with any symbols being revealed or with any type of award as shown by display 106.

10 Referring to Fig. 15A, a display device 30 or 32 including a first target set 100 with a plurality of target symbols or numbers 102a through 102j is illustrated. This embodiment includes a plurality of target sets. The gaming device randomly determines one of
15 the numbers zero through nine to be the target symbol or target number in the first target set. The gaming device selects nine as the target number. The target number is not identified to the player until the player picks the target number in the target set. The gaming device then
20 prompts the player to pick a number from the target set in a suitable manner (not shown) such as using a touch screen or other symbol or number selector connected to the processor. In this game, the player's first pick is the number five designated as 102f from the target set 100.

25 Referring now to Fig. 15B, the number five is highlighted as being the player's first pick. The processor of the gaming device 10 now determines whether the player's first pick is the target number which is nine, or whether the target number is higher or lower than
30 the picked number. In this example, the gaming device compares the first pick 102f to the target number nine. The gaming device 10 determines that the target number is higher than the picked number, five, and therefore

highlights the relationship indicator 108. Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target symbol is higher than the first picked number. The player must pick a symbol that is higher than their first
5 pick so that they have a chance to obtain the target symbol. Also, the pick remaining display 104 now shows that there are six picks remaining in the bonus game.

The player makes their second pick from the group of numbers 102 in target set 100 as illustrated in Fig. 15C.
10 The player picks the number eight, designated as 102i, which is highlighted. The processor of the gaming device determines that the target number nine is still higher than the second pick and therefore highlights the relationship indicator 108 as illuminated in Fig. 15D.
15 Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target number is higher than the picked number. Because there is only one number higher than the player's last pick, the player will likely obtain the target symbol on their next pick. It should be
20 appreciated that although the next pick appears obvious, the player preferably must make the correct pick of the target number. If by chance, the player picks a different number, the game will continue as described above. In one embodiment of the bonus game, the player will
25 automatically obtain the target number when there is only one possible pick remaining in the target set. In another embodiment, the processor deactivates numbers that were selected by the player and were not the target numbers. In this embodiment, the player eventually obtains the
30 target number when all of the other numbers in the target set, except the target number, are deactivated by the processor. Referring to Fig. 15D, the player has five picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by the pick

remaining display 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15E, the player picks the first target number. The player picked the number nine which is the target number in the target set 100. Thus, an award, which in this embodiment is a predetermined award value of twenty-five, is displayed in the award display 106. The player still has four picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated in the pick remaining display 104 and therefore continues to play the bonus game. It should thus be appreciated that in this embodiment, the number of picks the player uses for each target set will determine the number of picks available to the player for subsequent target sets.

In Fig. 15F, the player is now trying to match a second target number in a new target set 100a. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number four (102d) from the second target set. As illustrated, the picked numbers that were highlighted previously, are not highlighted anymore because the player is attempting to obtain a new target number in a new target set 100.

Here, the player picks the number six designated as 102g, from the group of numbers 102 in the second target set 100 as illustrated in Fig 15F. The processor of the gaming device 10 determines whether this pick is the target number or if the target number is higher or lower than the picked number. In this case, as shown in Fig. 15G, the target number four is lower than the picked number. Thus, the target number indicator 110 is illuminated, which notifies the player that the target number is lower than the picked number. On the next pick, the player must pick a lower number than their first pick in this target set to obtain the target number. After

this pick, the player has only three picks remaining as indicated by the pick remaining display 104.

In Fig. 15H, the player makes their second pick in the target set and the sixth pick overall in the bonus game. The player picks the number three designated as 102d. This pick is lower than their previous pick of six that is highlighted. However, as Fig. 15I illustrates, this pick is still not the target number. The processor of the gaming device 10 determines that the target number four is higher than the player's second pick, three, and notifies the player by illuminating the target symbol indicator 108. The player now must pick either the four (102e) or five (102f) with their next pick. The player has only two picks remaining as shown in the pick display 15 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15J, the player picks the target number from the second target set 100a. The player picked the number four (102e), which is the target number. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five to the player. The award of twenty-five is added to the player's previous award of twenty-five to give a total award for the bonus game of fifty. The pick remaining display 104 now shows that the player has only one pick remaining in this game to obtain another target number.

25 In Fig. 15K, the player makes a first pick in the third target set 100b. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number five (102f). Although this is the player's first pick in the new target set, it is the player's seventh and final pick in the bonus game. 30 The player picks the number five (102f) from the third target set. Fortunately for the player, the player picked the target number in the third target set on their first pick. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five

to the player for picking the target number. The player now has a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game. Since this is the final pick, the player receives a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game as indicated by the award display 106. If the player did not pick the target number with the player's final pick, the player may not obtain an award for the third target set 100b. It should be appreciated that the award associated with each subsequent target set or target number increases in one embodiment.

Referring now to Fig. 16, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the award or combined award equals a combination of target symbols. The symbols in this embodiment are preferably numbers. However, it should be appreciated that the symbols can be any suitable symbols desired by the game implementor. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides an award for the combination of each picked target number. The award or combined award is the order of the target numbers. Once the target number is picked, the target number is transferred to the award combination 112. The award combination preferably includes three award locations 114 including a first award location 114a, a second award location 114b and a third award location 114c. It should be appreciated that an award combination can include any suitable number of award locations as desired.

In this illustration, the player picked the first target number, which was the number one (102b). The number one, therefore, is transferred to the first award location 114a. The player then picked the target number five (102f) from the second target set. This target number is placed in the second award location 114b in the award combination 112. If the player ran out of picks at

this point in the bonus game, the player would receive the award indicated by the award combination. The award would be the value represented by the first and second target numbers in award locations 114a and 114b, which is
5 fifteen. This is a relatively low bonus award because the first number is a low number. Because of such possibility, the game implementor may want to weight higher numbers in the target set to be randomly selected for the first target set to increase the award to the
10 player in such cases. Alternatively, if the award is below a pre-determined threshold, the processor may cause a replay of the game to provide a sufficient award to the player. Alternatively, the number may be used as a non-credit value such as a multiplier, number of free spins or
15 number of free games.

In the third target set, the player picked the third target number, which was two. The target number two is transferred to the third and final award location 114c in the award combination 112. In this embodiment, the bonus
20 game ends when the player completes the award combination or runs out of picks. Here, the player completed the award combination 112. The player receives the total award indicated by the award combination 112, which is one hundred fifty-two. This award is displayed in the award
25 display 108.

In one aspect of this embodiment, the player may receive an additional award (not shown) for completing the award combination 112. The additional award may be a predetermined award, a random award or any type of award
30 desired. In another aspect of this embodiment, each subsequent target set is larger in size, or includes more symbols or numbers. By increasing the target set size, the level of difficulty of obtaining the target numbers in

each subsequent target set increases. For example, in a game with three target sets, the first target set includes five numbers, the second target set includes seven numbers and the third target set includes ten numbers. It should
5 also be appreciated that the target set size could decrease or could be randomly determined.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device provides additional awards to a player for having picks remaining at the end of a bonus game.
10 Preferably, the gaming device provides an award for each remaining pick. In another aspect of this embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game for having
15 picks remaining in the game. The player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards. In a further aspect of this embodiment, the gaming device displays several masked or hidden selections to the player (not shown). The player
20 picks a selection with each remaining pick from the bonus game. Each selection provides an additional award to the player. The additional award may be any type of award desired by the game implementor.

Referring now to Fig. 17, the display device 30 or 32
25 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the target set 200 includes symbols 202 designated as 202a to 202f. The symbols 202 are letters in the alphabet and are arranged in a vertical configuration. The gaming device provides a predetermined
30 award associated with each target letter. The award can also be based on the total number of target letters obtained by a player in the bonus game. The relationship indicators are represented by an up arrow 206 and a down

arrow 208. Relationship indicator 206 is highlighted or illuminated if a target letter is higher than or above a picked symbol. If the target letter is lower than or below a picked symbol then the down arrow 208 is highlighted. If a player obtains a target letter in the target set 100, the target letter is transferred to the award combination 204. The award combination includes one or more award locations. In this illustration, the award combination has four award locations 204a to 204d. The first award location 204a represents the first target letter obtained by the player, the second award location 204b represents the second target letter obtained by the player, and so forth. In this illustration, the player obtained all four of the target letters in the award combination 204. Each target letter represents an award determined by the game implementor. This embodiment also has an award display 210 that indicates the accumulated award provided to the player during the bonus game. It also includes a pick remaining display 212 that indicates the number of picks remaining in the bonus game.

Referring now to Fig. 18, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device provides the player with a number of picks at the beginning of the bonus game. The number of picks such as four is displayed to the player by the picks remaining display 304. The gaming device also displays a masked target combination 312 having one or more masked target numbers 313. The player picks a number 302a to 302j from the target set 300 until the player picks a target number. The target number indicators 308 and 310 indicate whether the selected number is higher or lower than the target number.

In Fig. 18, the target combination includes three masked target numbers "2," "1" and "8" (shown in phantom). The processor forms the target combination 312 by randomly selecting and placing the target numbers 313 in the target combination from a plurality of target numbers (not shown) based on the order that the target numbers are selected. It should be appreciated that the target combination may include target symbols or other characters as desired by the game implementor. It should also be appreciated that the order that the target numbers are placed in the target combination can be any suitable order. Additionally, the target combination may be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number in a target set is a digit in the target combination.

If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award (not shown) to the player. The award is preferably based on the number of picks that the player has remaining in the bonus game. In one embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain additional awards.

In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target numbers or symbols in the target combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the target combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target combination. It should also be appreciated that the player may also obtain an additional award or larger award for obtaining the target number or

symbol in a target set based on the number of picks used by the player.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In 5 this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game increases because the player does not know when their picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

While the present invention has been described in 10 connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements 15 included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by 20 the scope of the claims.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming device comprising:
 - a plurality of first selections including at least one
 - 5 trigger selection;
 - a plurality of second selections;
 - at least one display device which displays the first and
 - second selections;
 - a number of picks associated with said first and second
 - 10 selections;
 - a plurality of awards associated with the second
 - selections; and
 - a processor which enables a player to pick the first
 - selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
 - 15 until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of
 - picks for each pick by the player from the first
 - selections, enables the player to pick the second
 - selections when the player picks the trigger selection and
 - there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for
 - 20 each pick by the player from the second selections, and
 - provides any awards to the player associated with the
 - second selections picked by the player until there are no
 - picks remaining.
- 25 2. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the number of
- picks is greater than the number of first selections.
3. The gaming device of Claim 1 or 2, wherein the
- plurality of awards includes at least one relatively large
- 30 award and a plurality of relatively small awards.
4. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which

includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the first selections.

5. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the first selections.

6. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

7. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

8. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein at least one award is associated with each of the second selections.

9. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional award associated with the first selections.

10. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the number of picks is predetermined.

11. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the number of picks is randomly determined.

12. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger

selection.

13. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when
5 the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

14. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

10 15. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 13, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

16. The gaming device of Claim 15, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member
15 which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

17. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

20

18. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

25 19. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

20. A gaming device comprising:

30 a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;

at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second selections, wherein the number of picks is greater than
5 the number of first selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection,
10 reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections; and provides any
15 awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

21. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

20

22. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

23. The gaming device of Claim 22, wherein the mechanical
25 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

24. The gaming device of Claim 22 or 23, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or
30 more trigger symbols.

25. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 24, wherein

the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

26. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 25, which
5 includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

27. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of
10 trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with the first and second
15 selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks one of the trigger
20 selections or until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks any of the trigger selections and there are picks remaining, reduces the
25 number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

30 28. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

29. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

30. The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

31. The gaming device of Claim 29 or 30, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

32. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 31, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

15

33. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 32, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

20 34. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 33, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.

25 35. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 34, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks one of the trigger selections with the last pick.

30 36. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 35, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

37. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of
trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections associated with each of
5 the trigger selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first
selections until the player picks one of the trigger
selections or until these are no picks remaining, reduces
15 the number of picks for each pick by the player from the
first selections, enables the player to pick second
selections associated with said trigger selection picked
by the player if there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
20 second selections and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
until there are no picks remaining.

38. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
25 device is a touch screen.

39. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
device is a mechanical display.

30 40. The gaming device of Claim 39, wherein the mechanical
display includes at least one movable revealing member
which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

41. The gaming device of Claim 39 or 40, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

5 42. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 41, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

43. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 42, wherein
10 the awards associated with each of the plurality of second selections are different.

44. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 43, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the
15 display device.

45. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 44, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking one of the
20 trigger selections.

46. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 45, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.
25

47. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 46, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

30 48. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;

a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
5 selections;
at least one additional pick associated with one of the
first or second selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
10 a processor which enables a player to pick the first
selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of
picks for each pick by the player from the first
selections, provides at least one additional pick when the
15 player picks one of the first selections having at least
one additional pick associated with said first selection,
enables the player to pick the second selections when the
player picks the trigger selection and there are picks
remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the second selections, provides at least
one additional pick when the player picks one of the
second selections having at least one additional pick
associated with said second selection, and provides any
awards to the player associated with the second selections
25 picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

49. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display
device is a touch screen.

30 50. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display
device is a mechanical display.

51. The gaming device of Claim 50, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.
- 5 52. The gaming device of Claim 50 or 51, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.
53. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 52, wherein
10 the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.
54. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 53, wherein at least one of the additional picks is associated with a
15 bonus symbol.
55. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 54, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.
20
56. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 55, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.
25
57. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 56, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.
- 30 58. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 57, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

59. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one
trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;
5 at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
at least one relationship indicator which identifies the
10 relationship between the trigger selection and each
selection picked by a player;
a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables the player to pick the first
15 selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
until there are no picks remaining, activates the
relationship indicator to identify the relationship
between the trigger selection and the selection picked by
the player reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the first selections, enables the player
to pick second selections when the player picks the target
selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
second selections and provides any awards associated with
25 the second selections picked by the player until there are
no picks remaining.

60. The gaming device of Claim 59, wherein the number of
picks is greater than the number of first selections.

30

61. The gaming device of Claim 59 or 60, which includes a
selector for enabling the player to activate the

relationship indicator.

62. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 61, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

5

63. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 62, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

64. The gaming device of Claim 63, wherein the mechanical
10 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

65. The gaming device of Claim 64, wherein the first
15 selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

66. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 65, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the
20 display device.

67. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 66, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.

25

68. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 67, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

30 69. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 68, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

70. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of sets including first selections;
at least one trigger selection included in each of said
sets;
5 a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the sets of
first selections and the second selections;
a number of picks associated with each of the sets and the
second selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick first
selections in each of the sets until the player picks the
trigger selection in the sets or until there are no picks
15 remaining to pick first selections in the sets, reduces
the number of picks associated with each set for each
first selection picked by the player in those sets,
enables the player to pick the second selections when the
player picks at least one trigger selection, provides a
20 total number of picks to the player based on the sum of
the picks remaining for each set, reduces the total number
of picks for each pick by the player from the second
selections, and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
25 until there are no picks remaining.

71. The gaming device of Claim 70, wherein the number of
picks associated with each set is greater than the number
of first selections in said sets.

30

72. The gaming device of Claim 70 or 71, which includes
at least one additional pick associated with one of the

first selections in each of the sets.

73. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 72, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of
5 the first selections in each of the sets.

74. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 73, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

10

75. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 74, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

15 76. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 75, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player does not pick any of the trigger selections in the sets before running out of picks for said sets.

20 77. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 76, which includes at least one additional pick associated with each of the trigger selections in the sets.

78. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 77, which
25 includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

79. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

30

80. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

81. The gaming device of Claim 80, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals the first selections in each of the sets.

5

82. The gaming device of Claim 80 or 81, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

10 83. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 82, wherein the second selections replace the sets of first selections on the display device.

84. A method of operating a gaming device, the method
15 comprising the steps of:

- (a) displaying a plurality of first selections including a trigger selection to a player;
- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
- 20 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) displaying a plurality of second selections to the player when the player picks the trigger selection wherein
- 25 the second selections are associated with awards;
- (f) repeating steps (g) to (i) until there are no picks remaining;
- (g) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (h) reducing the number of picks for each second
- 30 selection picked by the player; and
- (i) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player.

85. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second selections are displayed on a touch screen.

86. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second
5 selections are displayed on a mechanical display.

87. The method of any of Claims 84 to 86, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

10

88. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the number of picks is reduced by a predetermined amount.

89. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the
15 number of picks is reduced by a random amount.

90. The method of any of Claims 84 to 89, wherein the awards include a plurality of relatively small awards and at least one relatively large award.

20

91. The method of any of Claims 84 to 90, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player picks the trigger selection with the final pick.

25

92. The method of any of Claims 84 to 91, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player does not pick the trigger selection before running out of picks.

30

93. The method of any of Claims 84 to 92, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the

player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

94. The method of any of Claims 84 to 93, which includes
5 the step of providing at least one multiplier to the player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

95. The method of any of Claims 84 to 94, wherein the
10 first selections include a plurality of trigger selections.

96. The gaming device of any of Claims 84 to 95, wherein
the second selections replace the first selections.

15

97. The method of any of Claims 84 to 96, wherein the steps (a) to (i) are provided to the player through a data network.

20 98. The method of Claim 97, wherein the data network is an internet.

99. The method of any of Claims 84 to 98, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the
25 player for the second selections.

100. A method of operating a gaming device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a plurality of first selections including
30 at least one trigger selection and a plurality of second selections to a player, wherein a plurality of awards are associated with the second selections;

- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
- 5 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (f) reducing the number of picks for each second
- 10 selection picked by the player;
- (g) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player; and
- (h) repeating steps (e) to (g) until there are no picks remaining.

Application No: GB 0302849.5
Claims searched: 1-19, 27-69 and 84-99

Examiner: Stuart Purdy
Date of search: 24 June 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance	
XE	1, 27, 48, and 84 at least	EP 1298607 A2	(IGT) see figure 7, column 11 line 19, column 11 line 20-22, and column 11 line 49-column 12 line 12;
XP	1, 27, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 6439995 B1	(HUGHES-BAIRD) see column 2 lines 54-56, and column 7 lines 1-8
XP	1, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 2003/0027616 A1	(VANCURA) see page 3 paragraph 29.

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^v:

G4V

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁷:

G07F

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

WPI, JAPIO, AND EPODOC

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(31) 10063347 (32) 12.04.2002

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(51) INT CL⁷

G07F 17/32

(52) UK CL (Edition V)

G4V VBK V116 V117 V118 V119

(56) Documents Cited

EP 1298607 A2 US 6439995 B1
US 20030027616 A1

(58) Field of Search

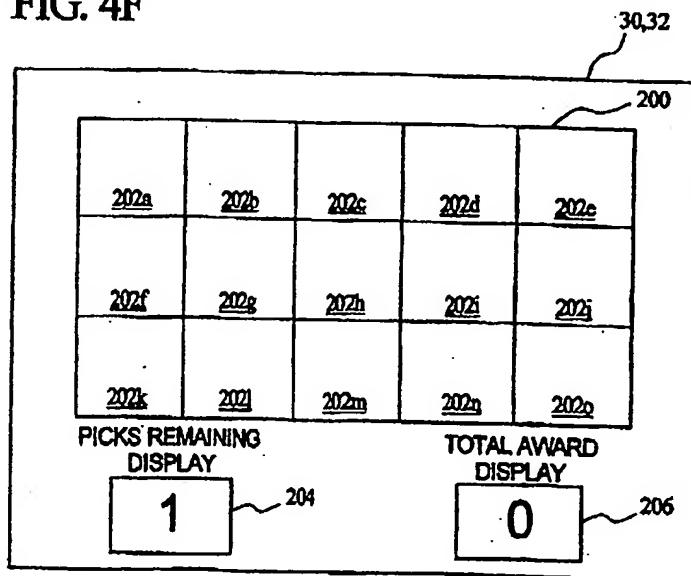
UK CL (Edition V) G4V VAA VBK
INT CL⁷ G07F 17/32 17/34
Other: Online: WPI, JAPIO AND EPODOC

(54) Abstract Title

Pick reduction gambling machine

(57) A reel type gambling machine comprises an additional bonus game. The bonus game is presented on a supplementary display 30 which shows a number of selection elements 202a-202o, picks remaining 204 and total awards 206. The selection elements may be in the form of single rows, a matrix or a random distribution. Upon graduation to the bonus game a player picks from the first selection elements and the number of picks are reduced until the player picks a trigger selection. When triggered the display shows a number of second selections, each of which is associated with an award, and the player picks the second selections until there are no picks remaining. The selections may be made via a touch screen 200 or mechanical doors (not shown).

FIG. 4F



GB 2 385 701

FIG. 1A

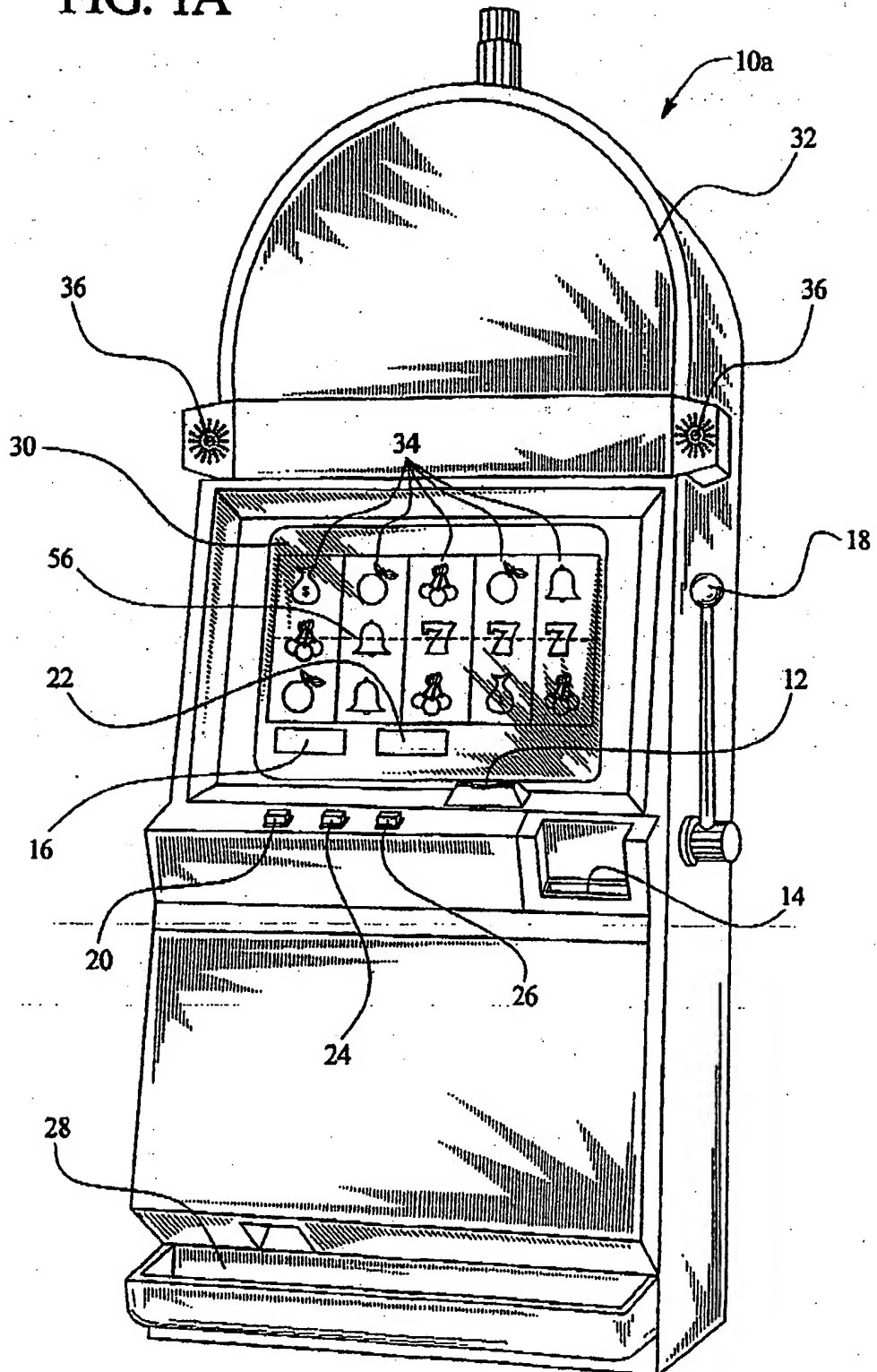


FIG. 1B

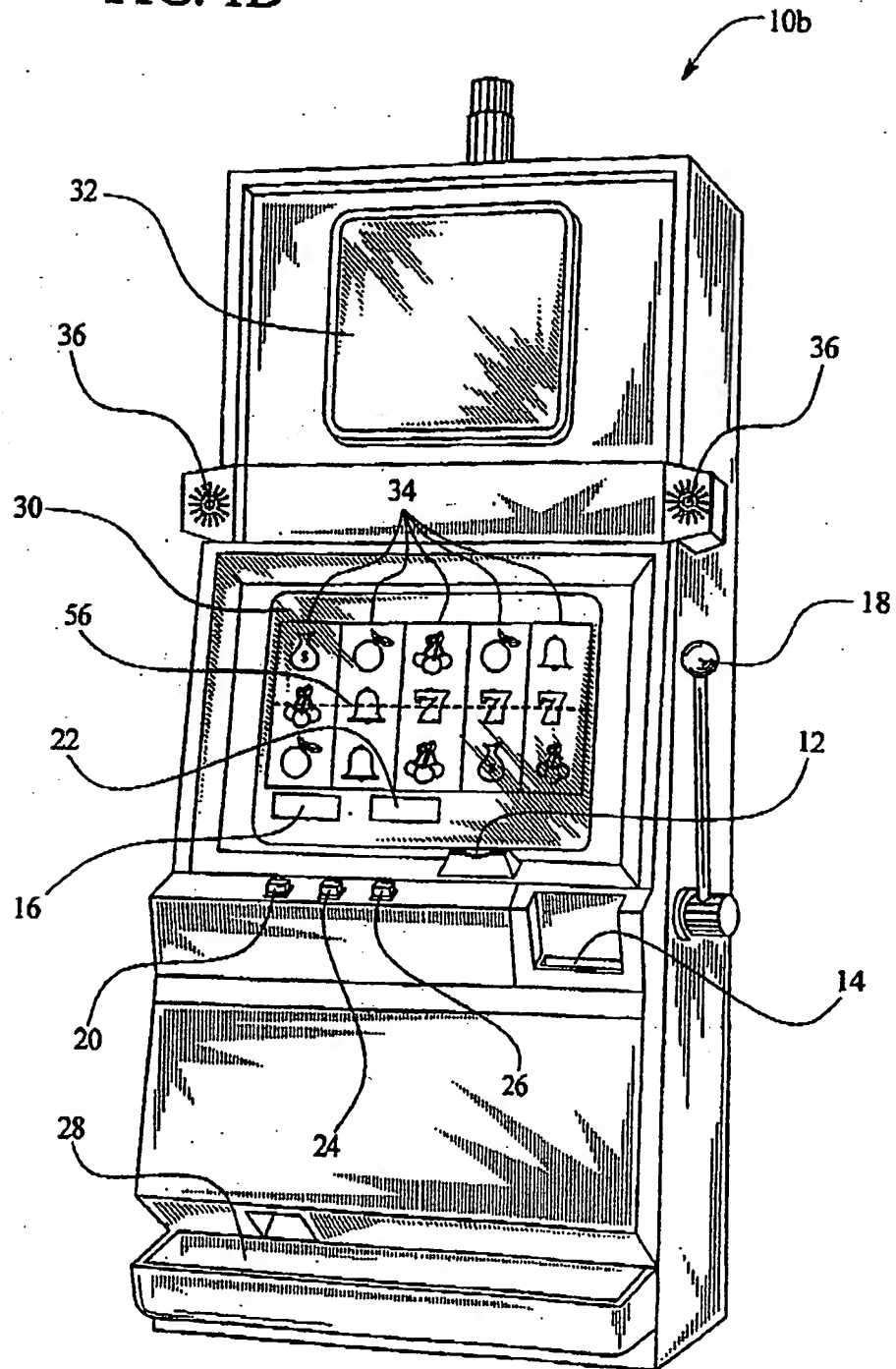


FIG. 2

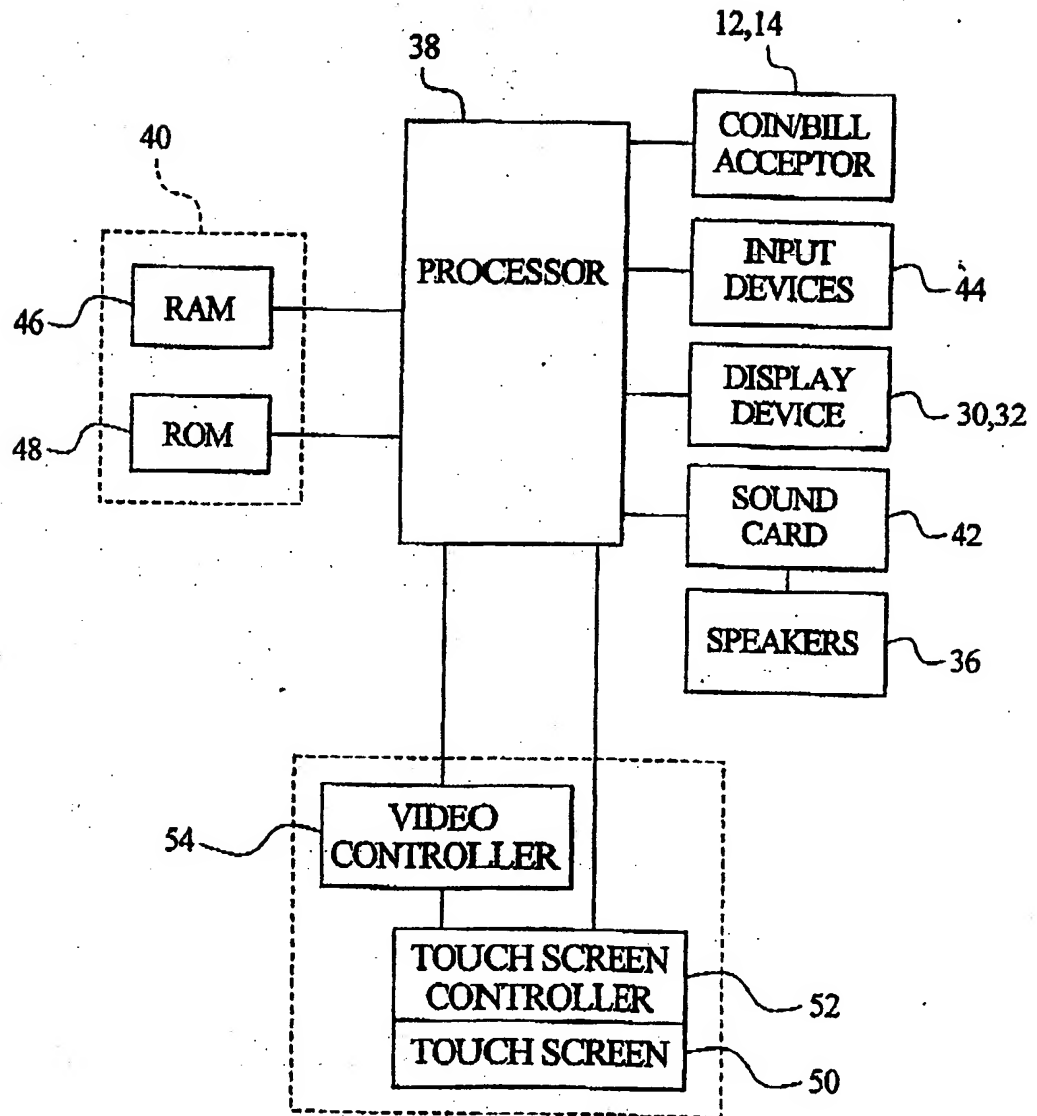


FIG. 3A

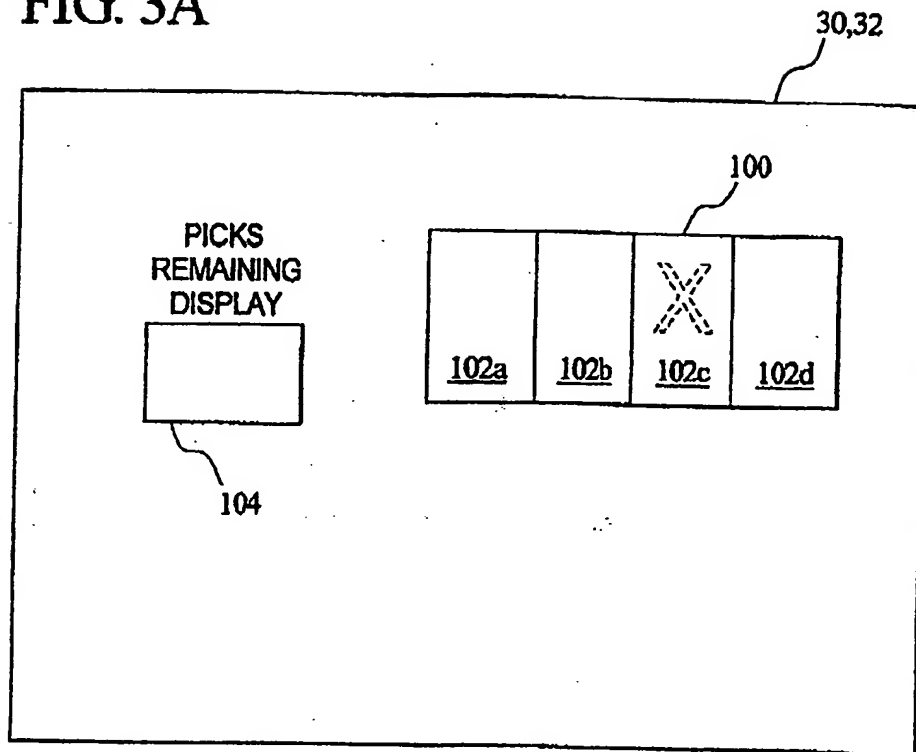


FIG. 3B

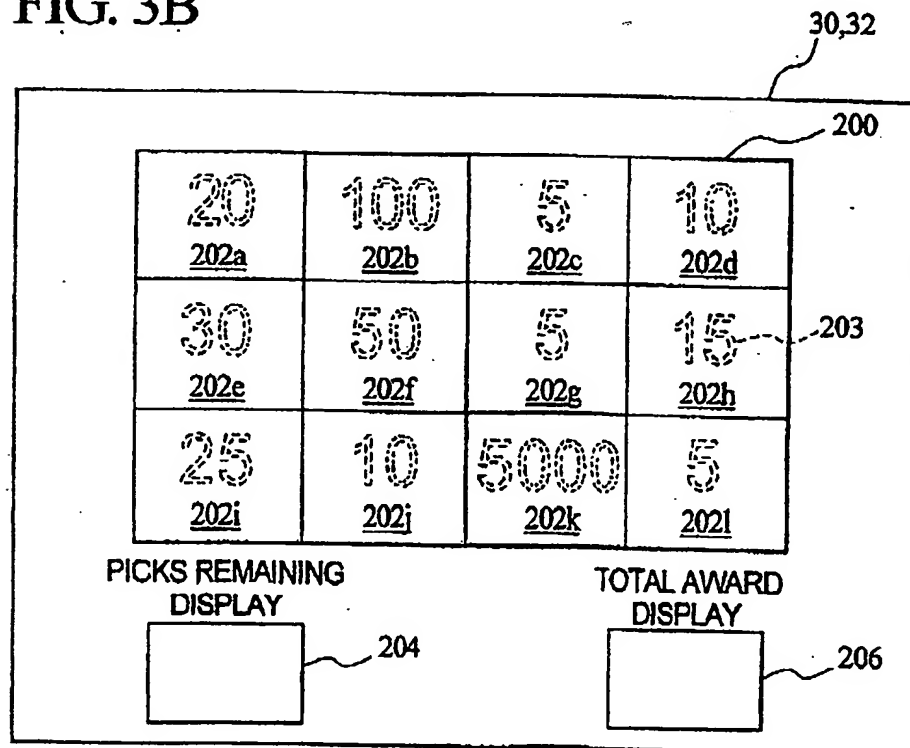


FIG. 4A

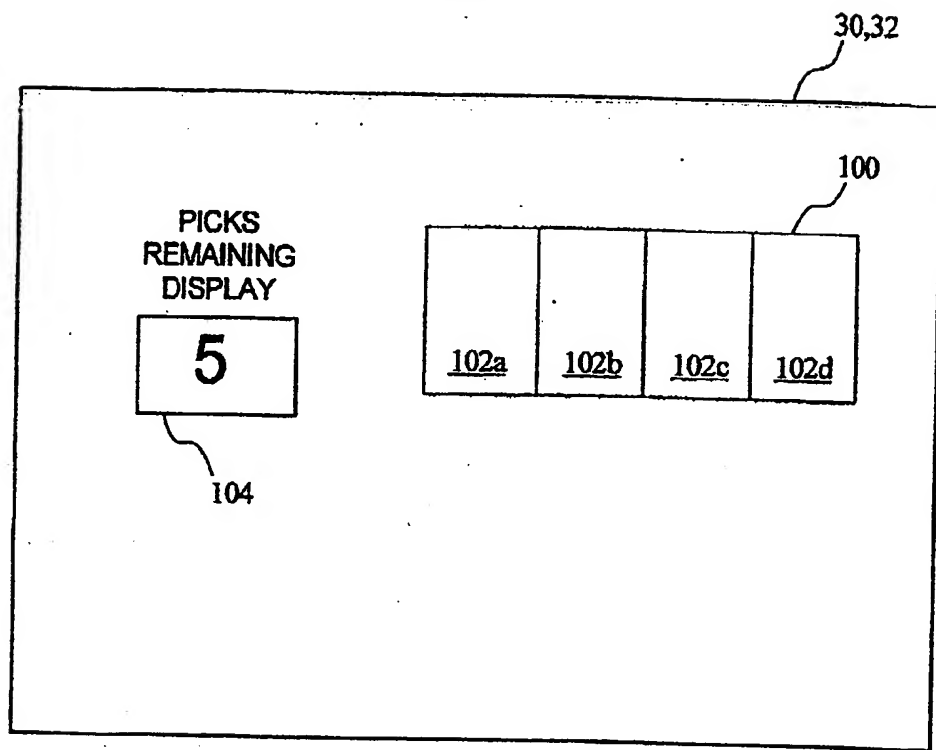


FIG. 4B

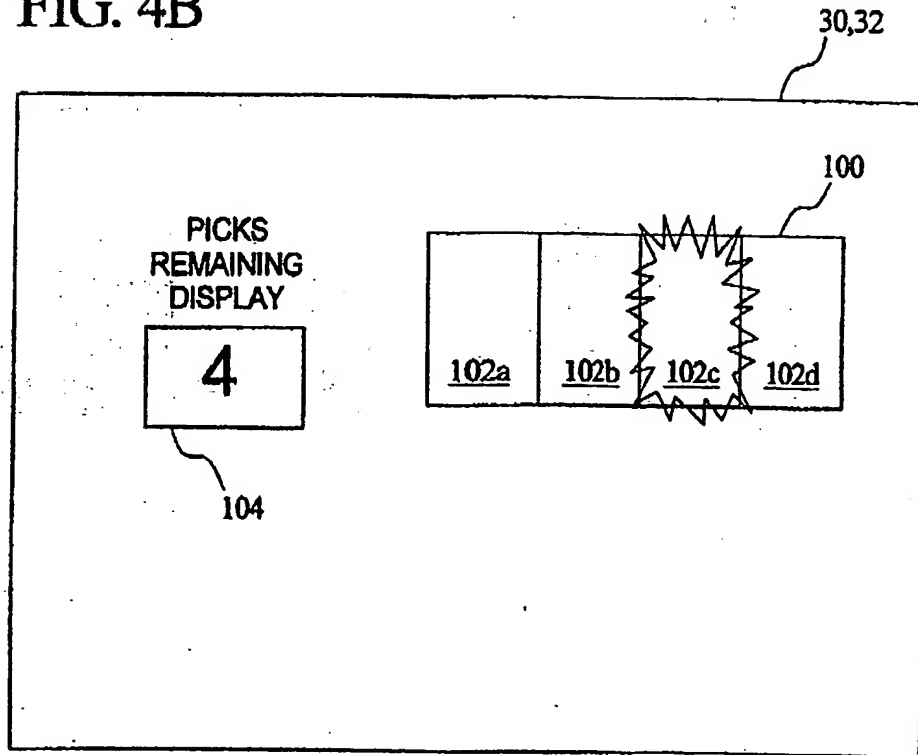


FIG. 4C

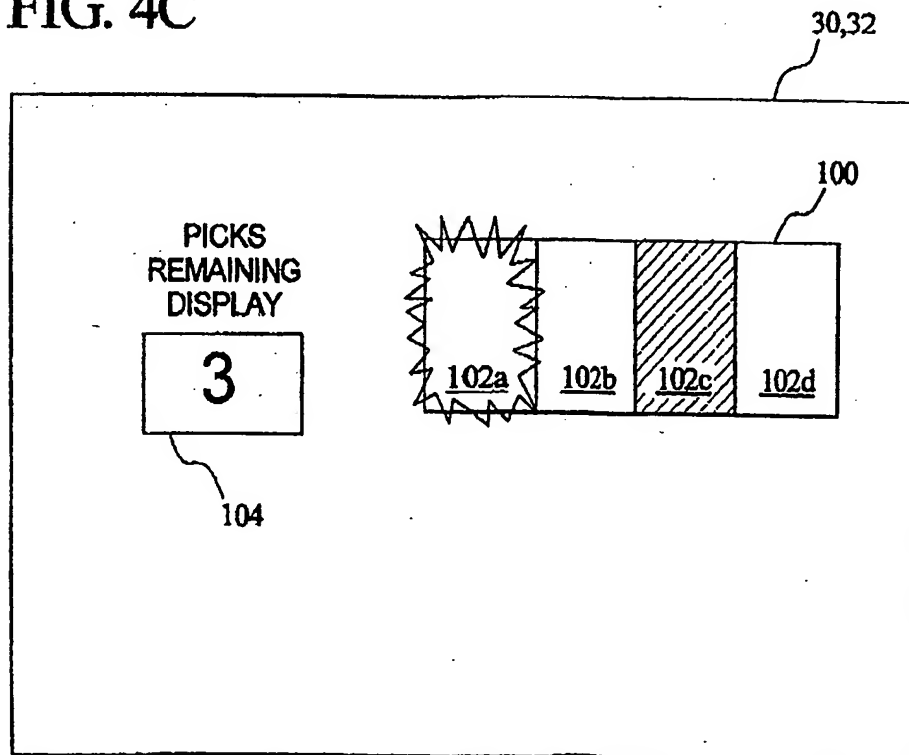


FIG. 4D

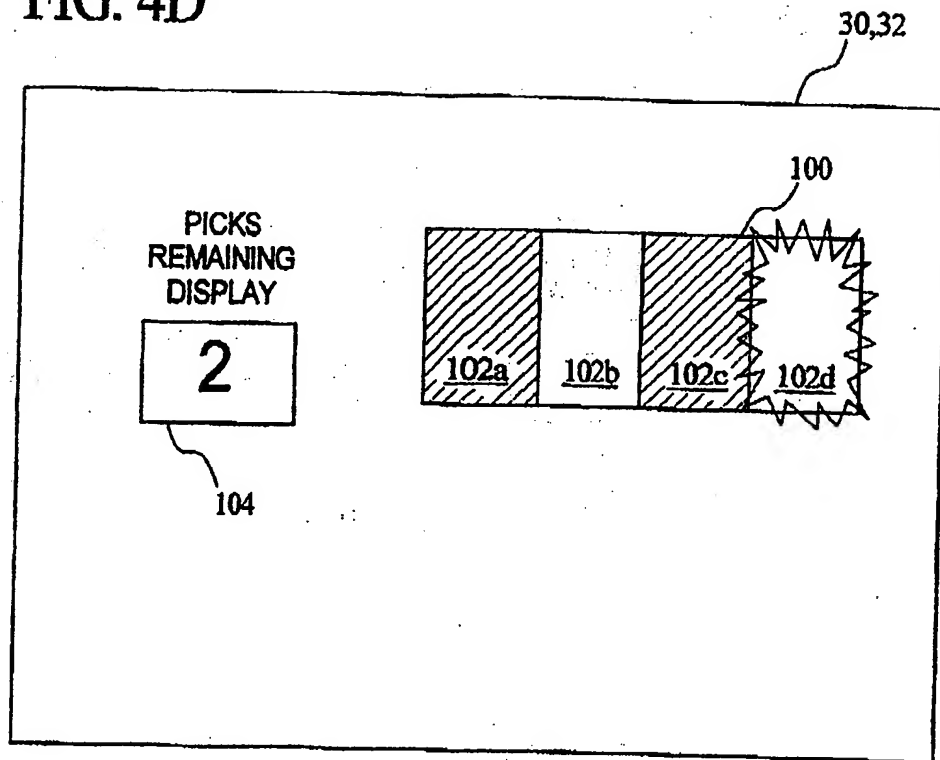


FIG. 4E

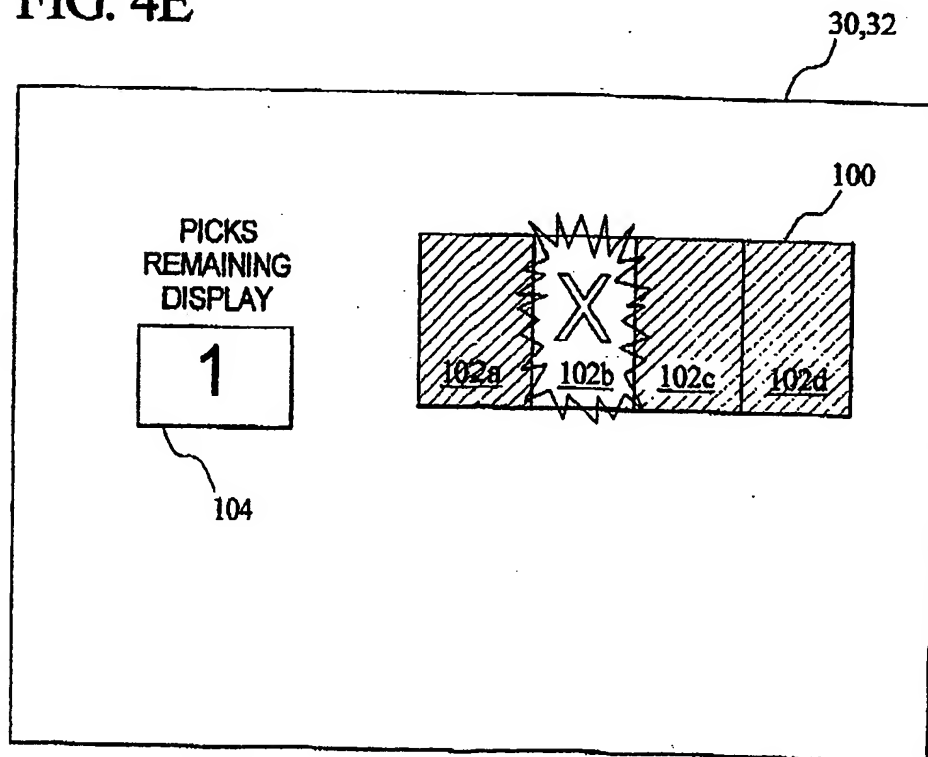


FIG. 4F

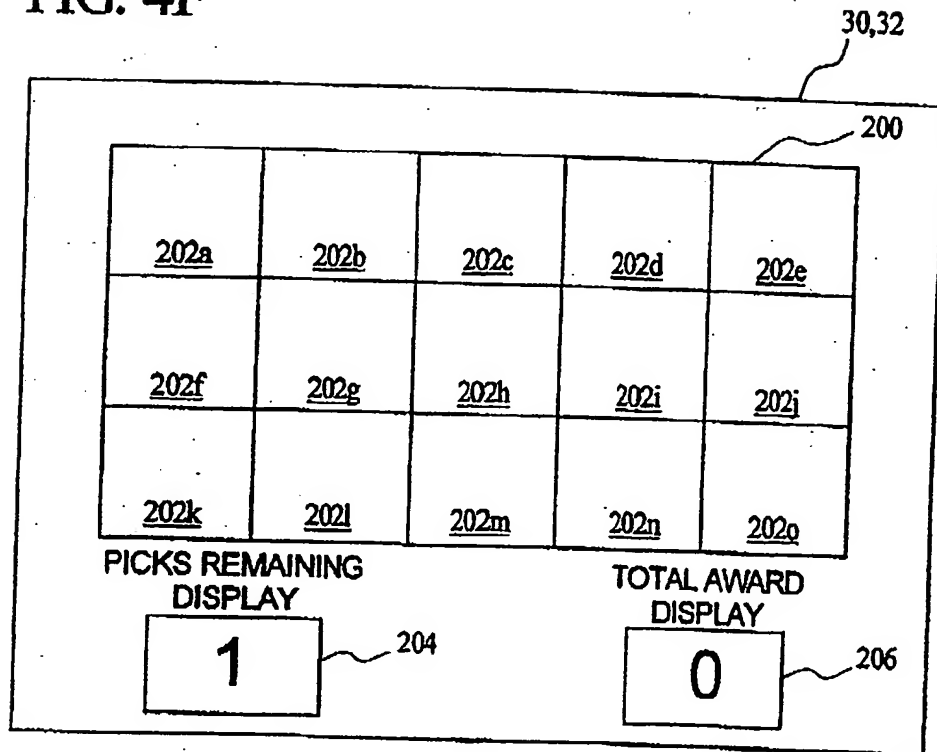


FIG. 4G

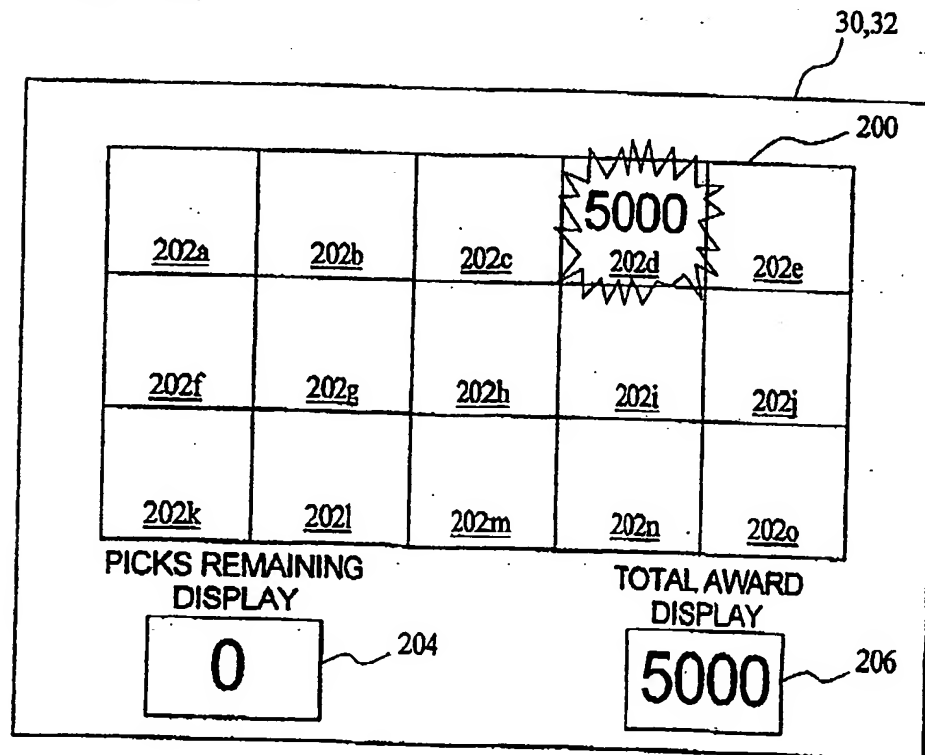


FIG. 5A

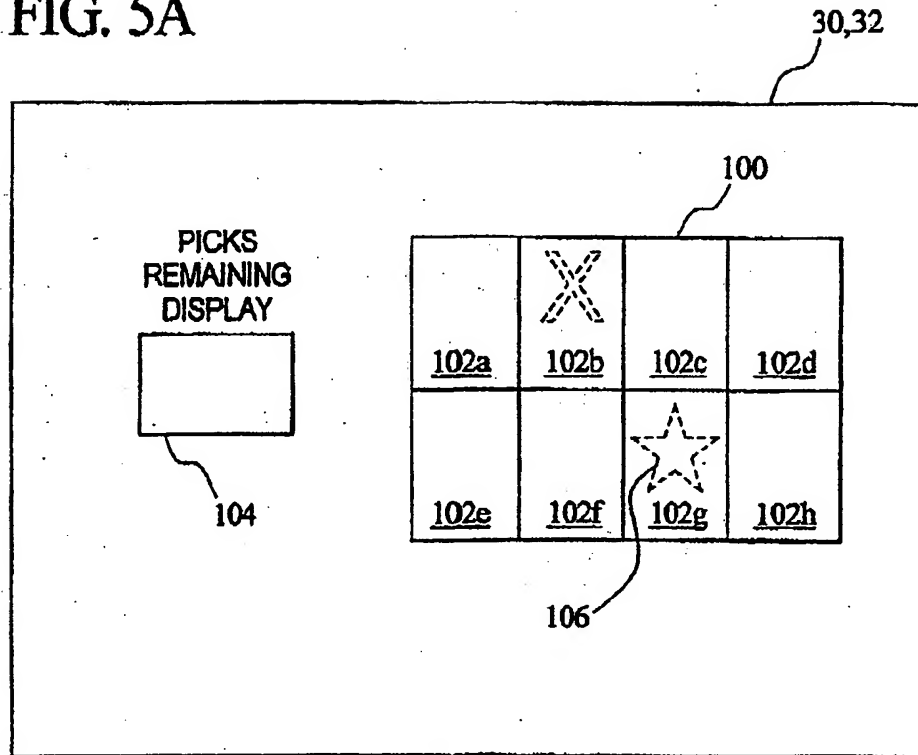


FIG. 5B

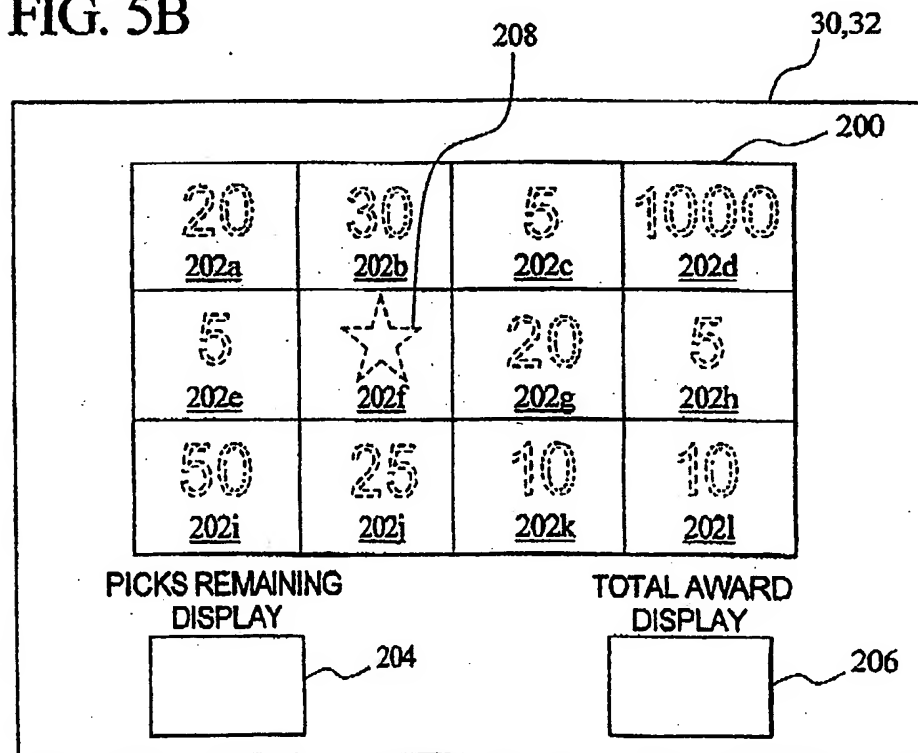


FIG. 6

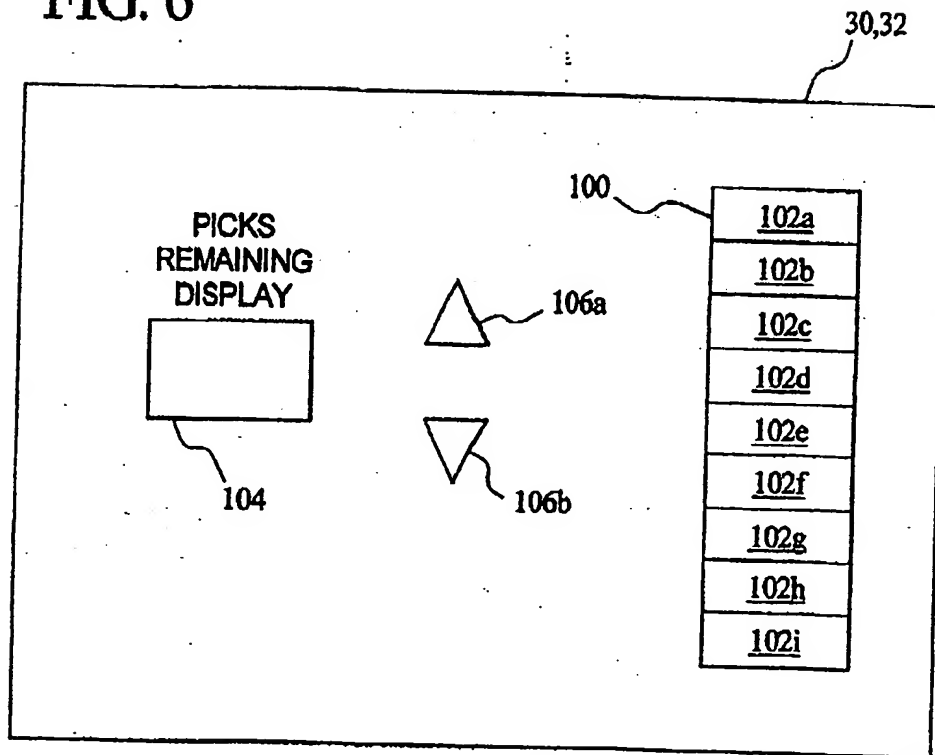
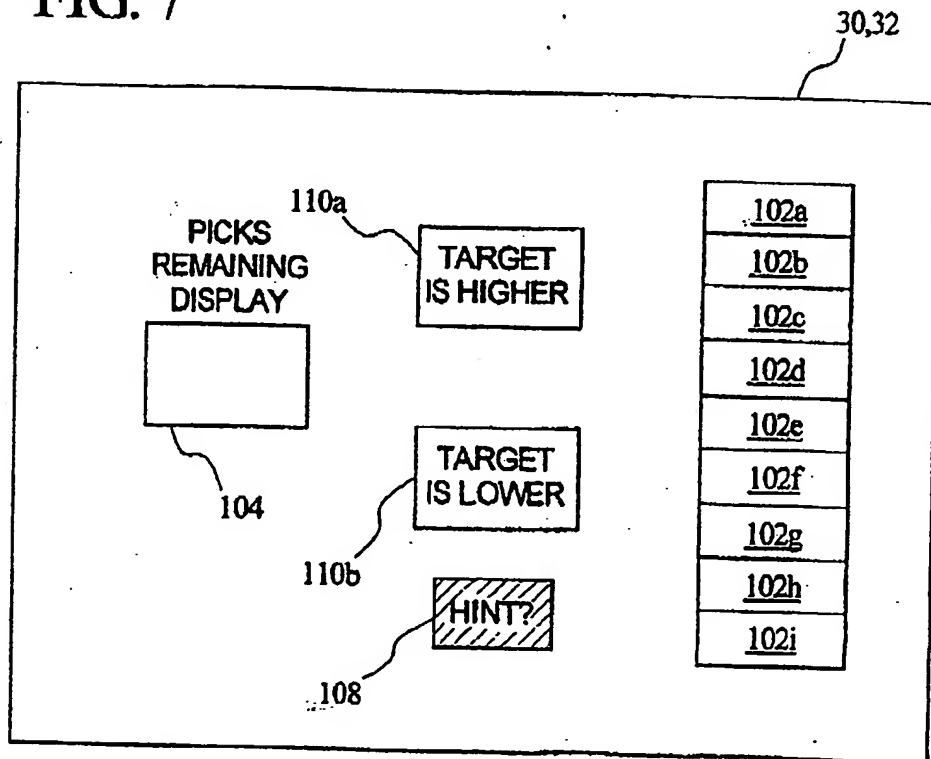


FIG. 7



11/26

FIG. 8A

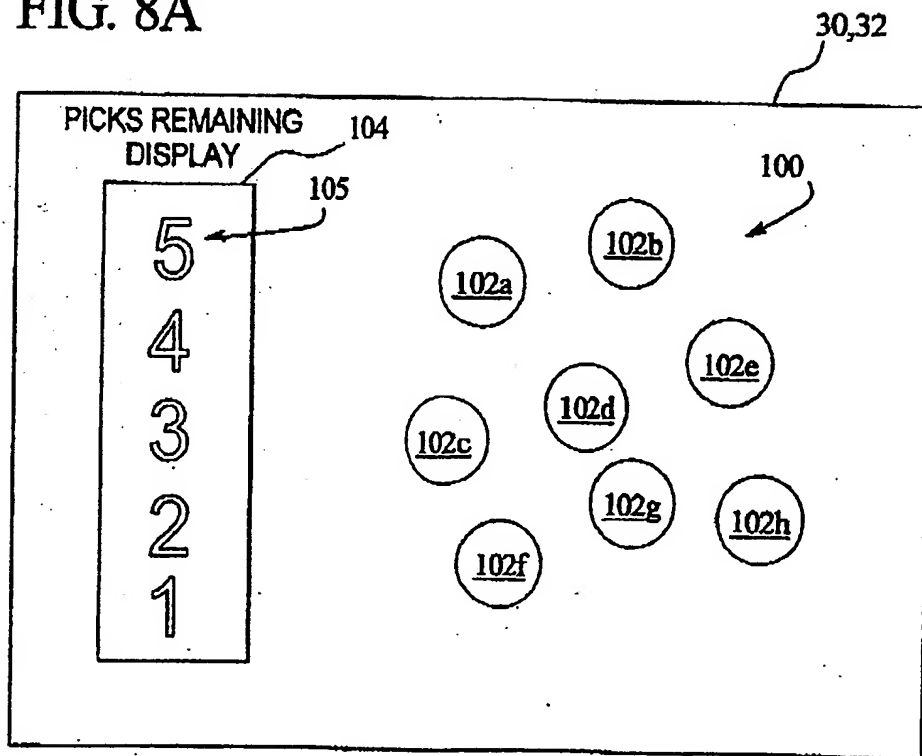


FIG. 8B

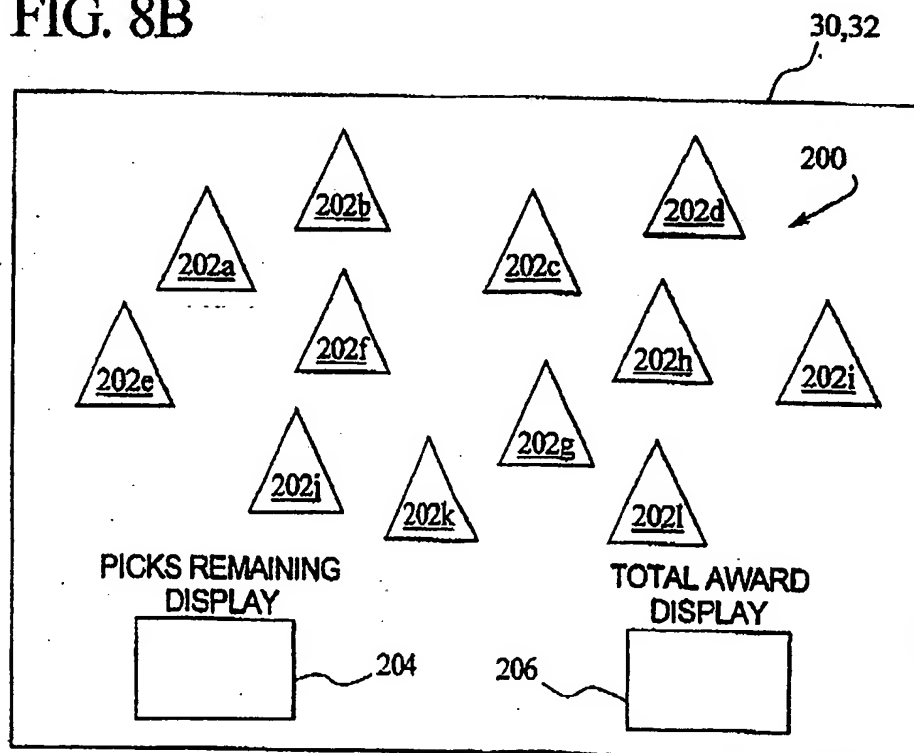


FIG. 9A

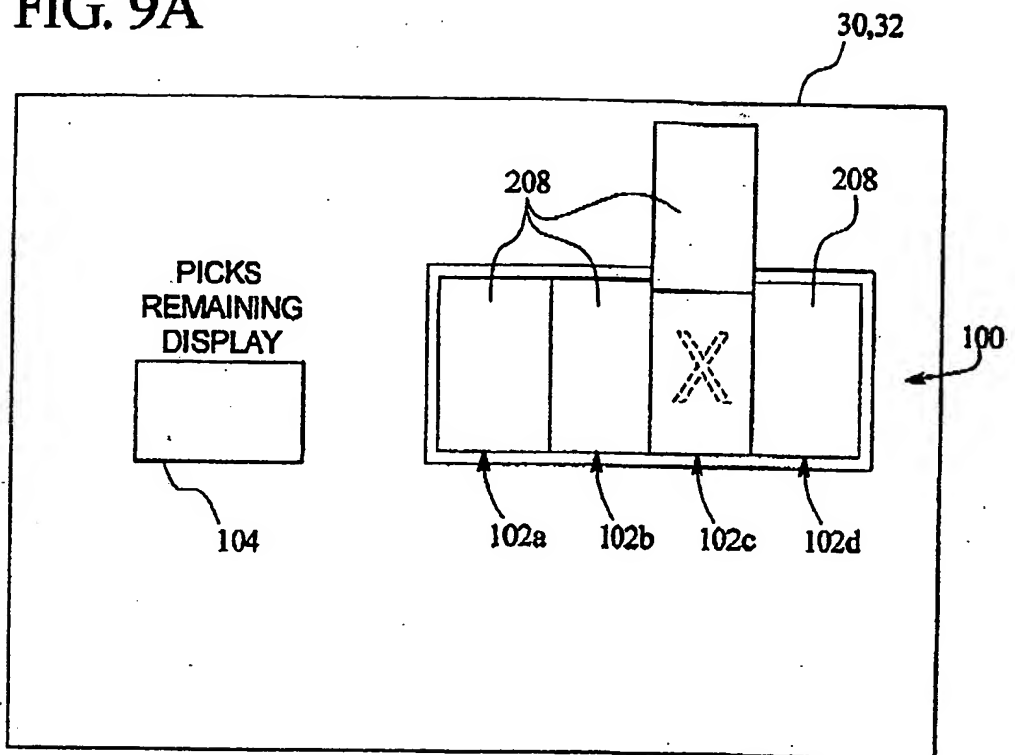


FIG. 9B

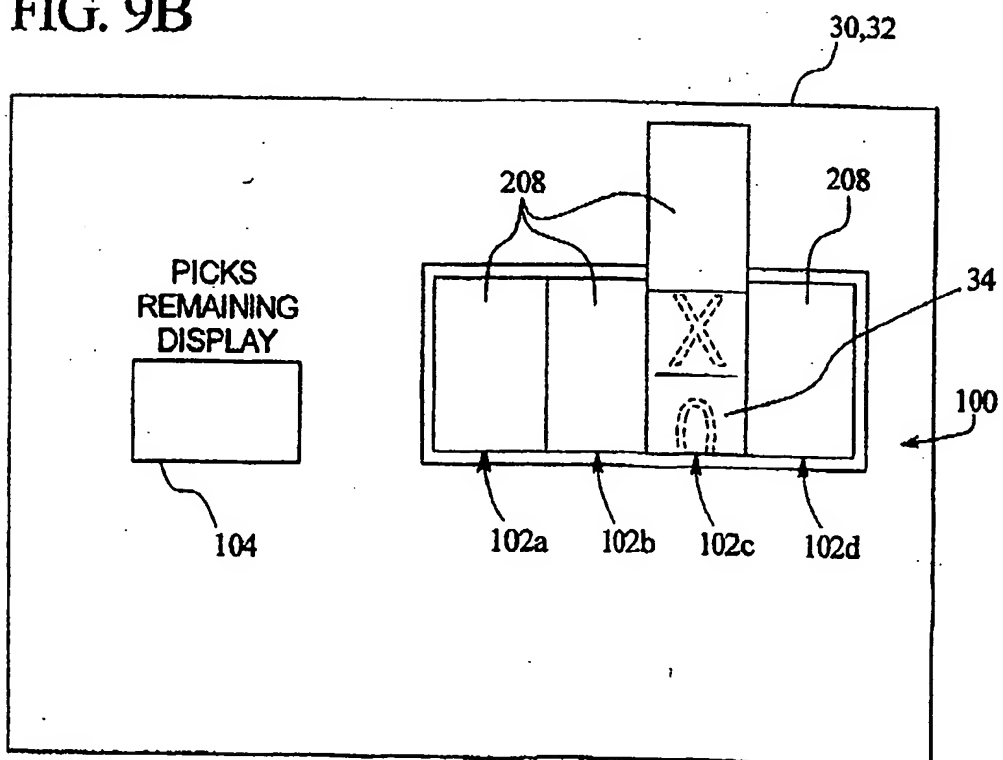


FIG. 10

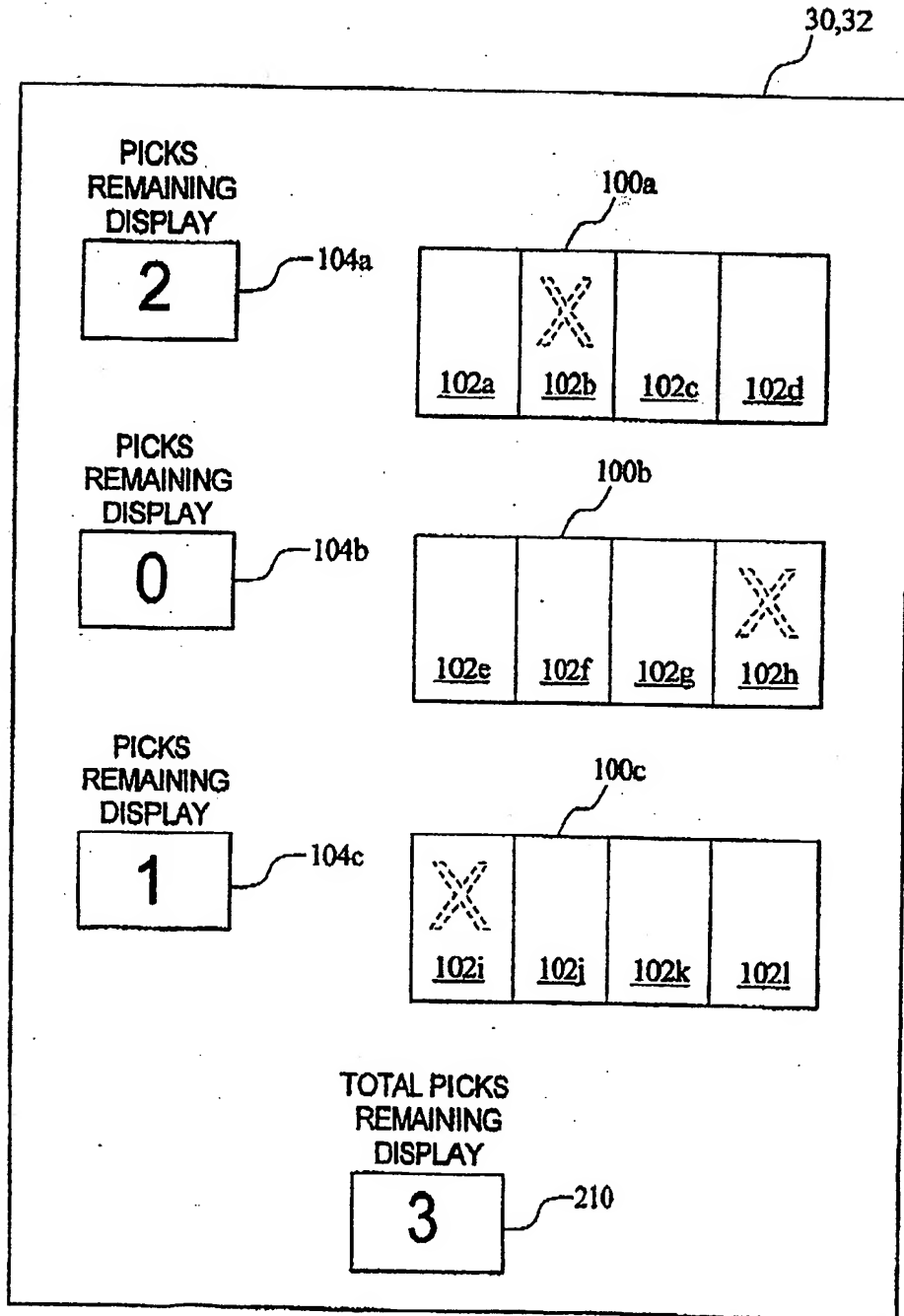


FIG 11A

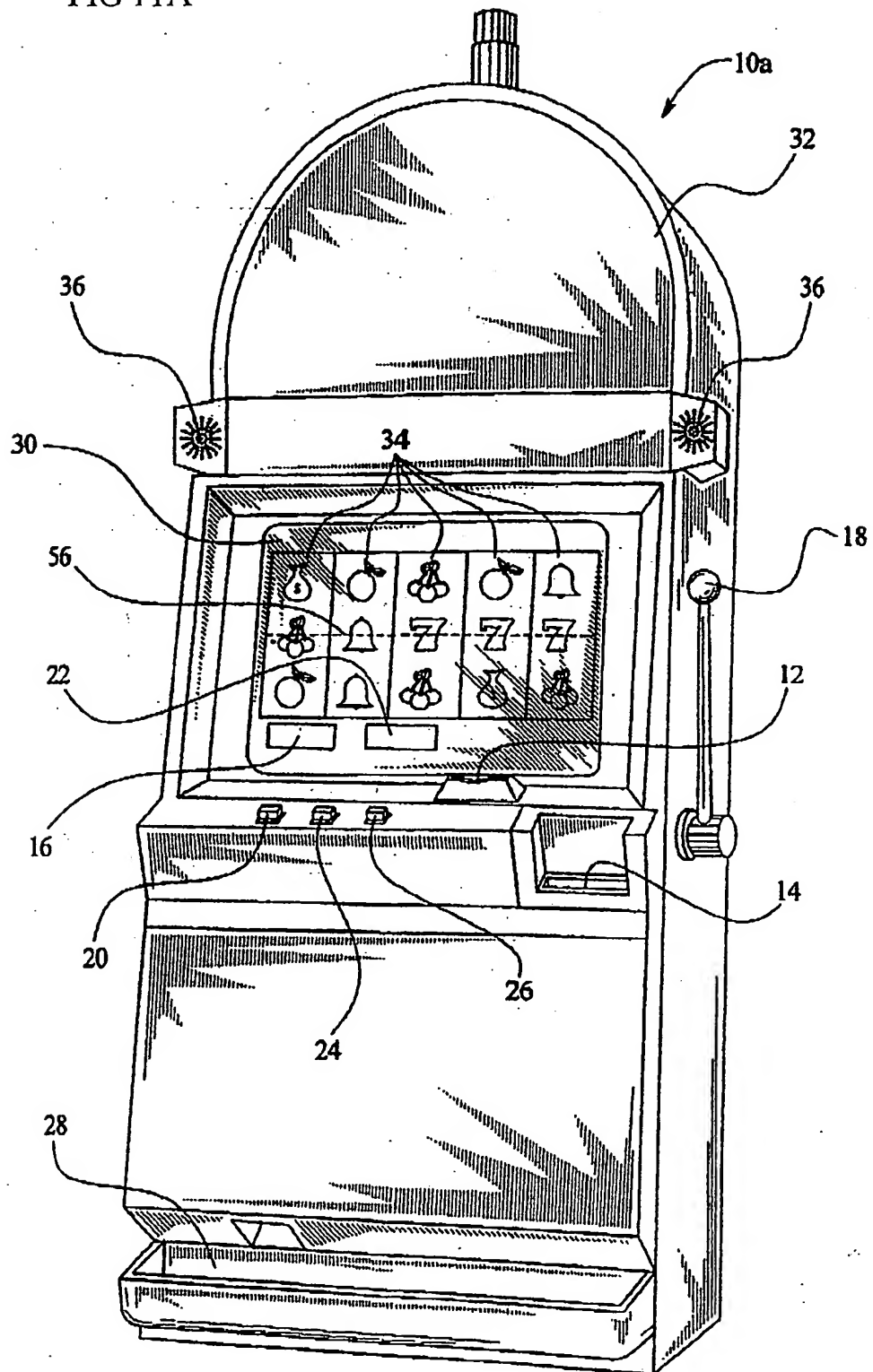


FIG 11B

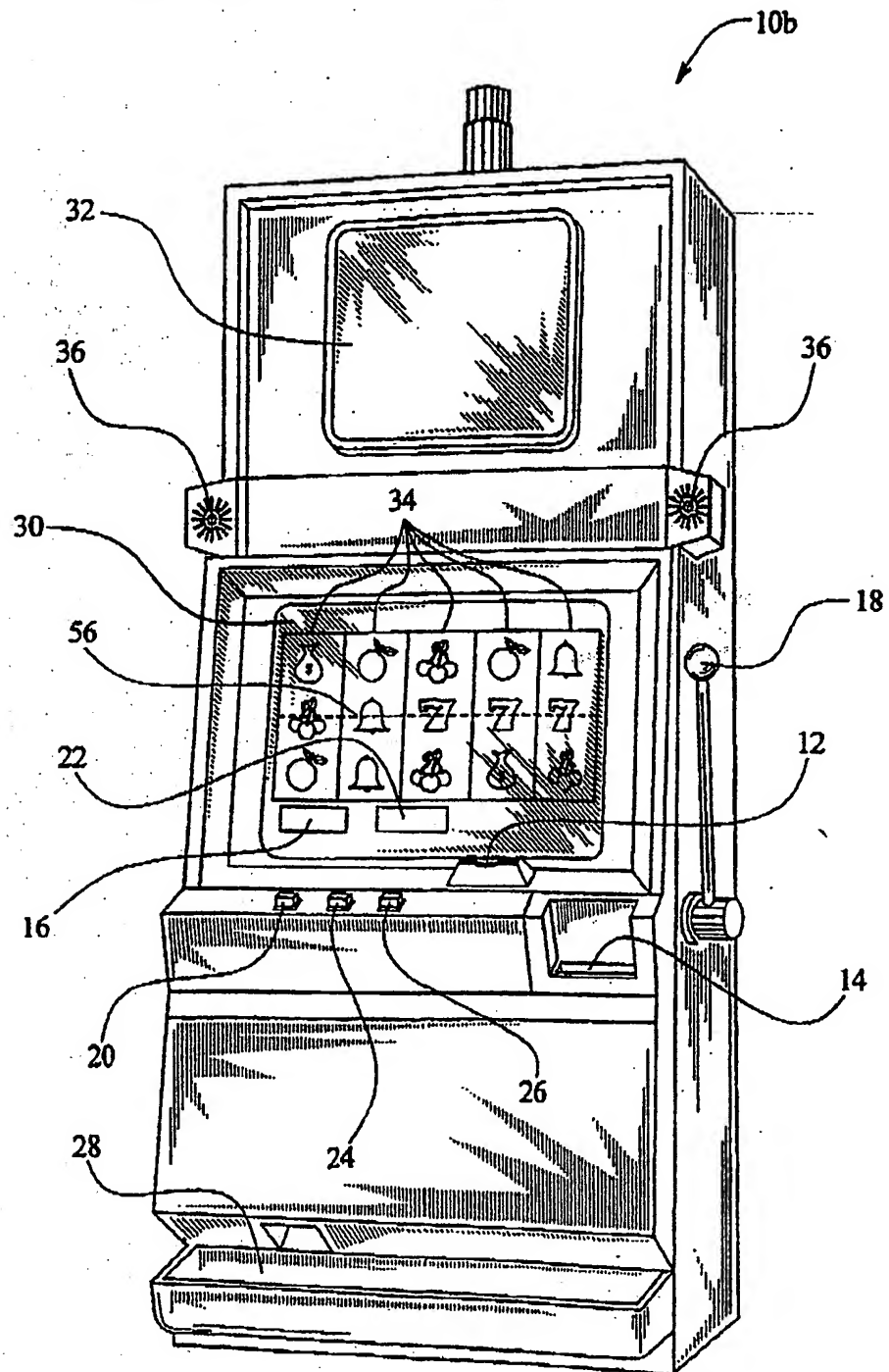


FIG 12

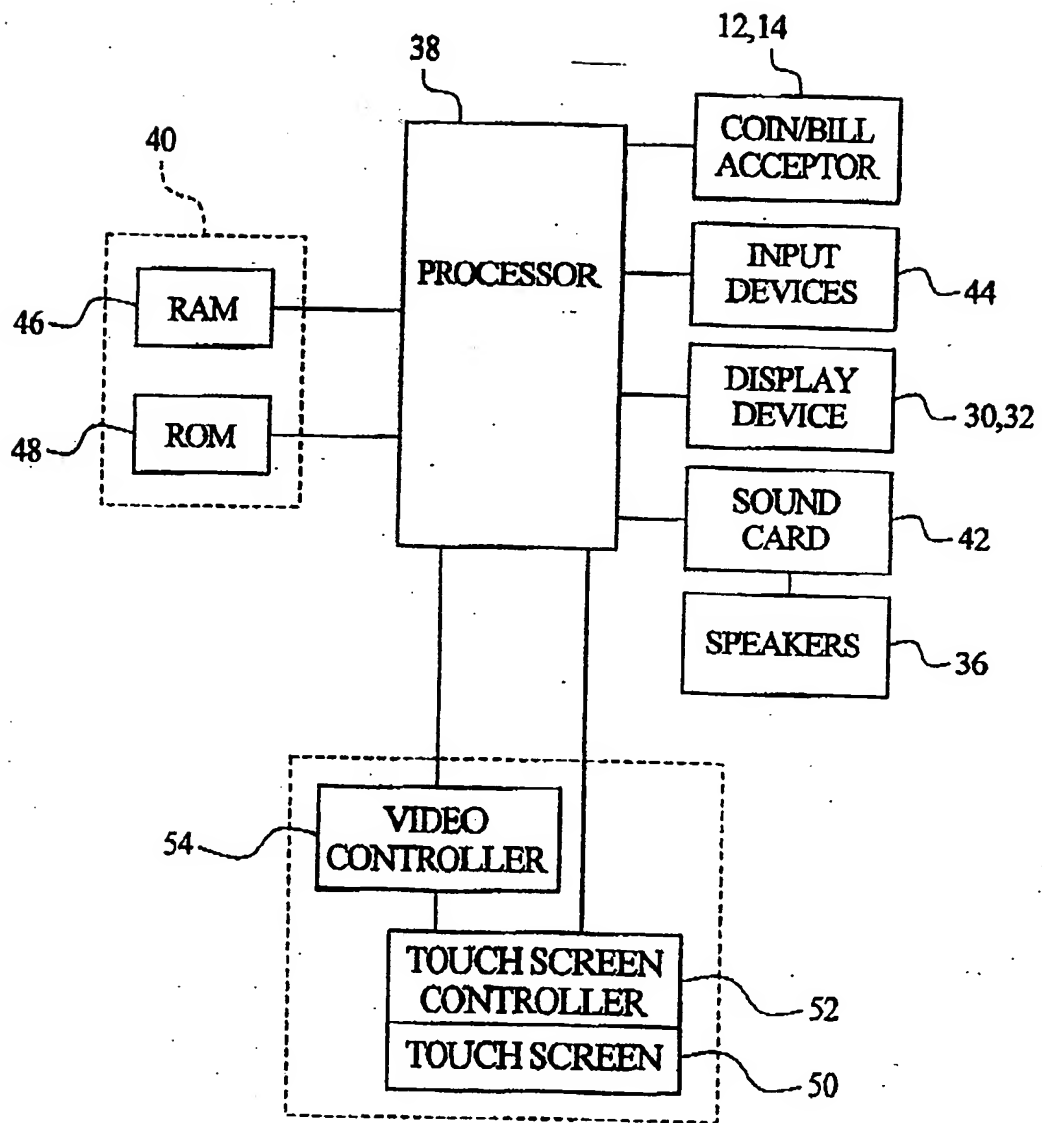


FIG 13

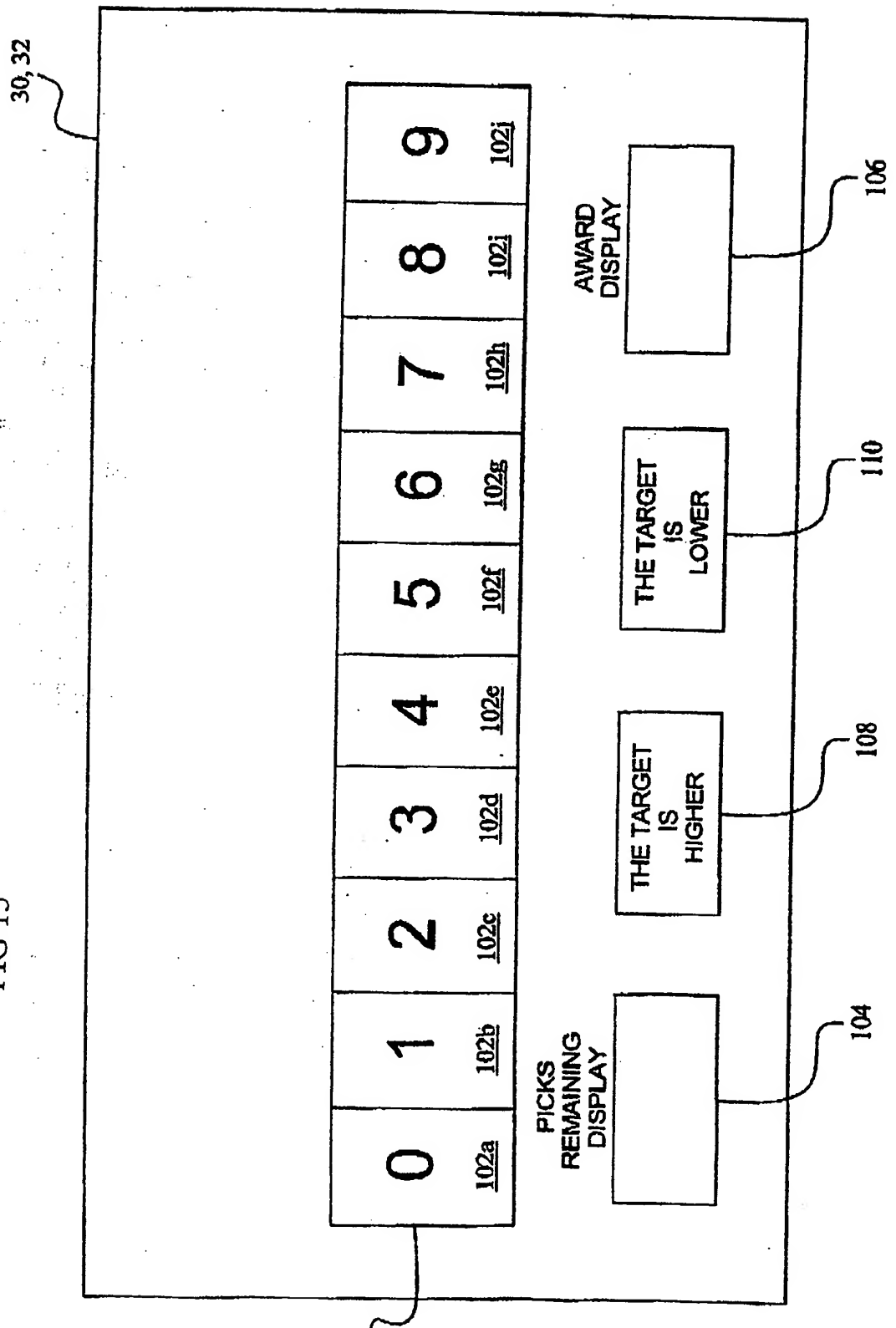


FIG 14

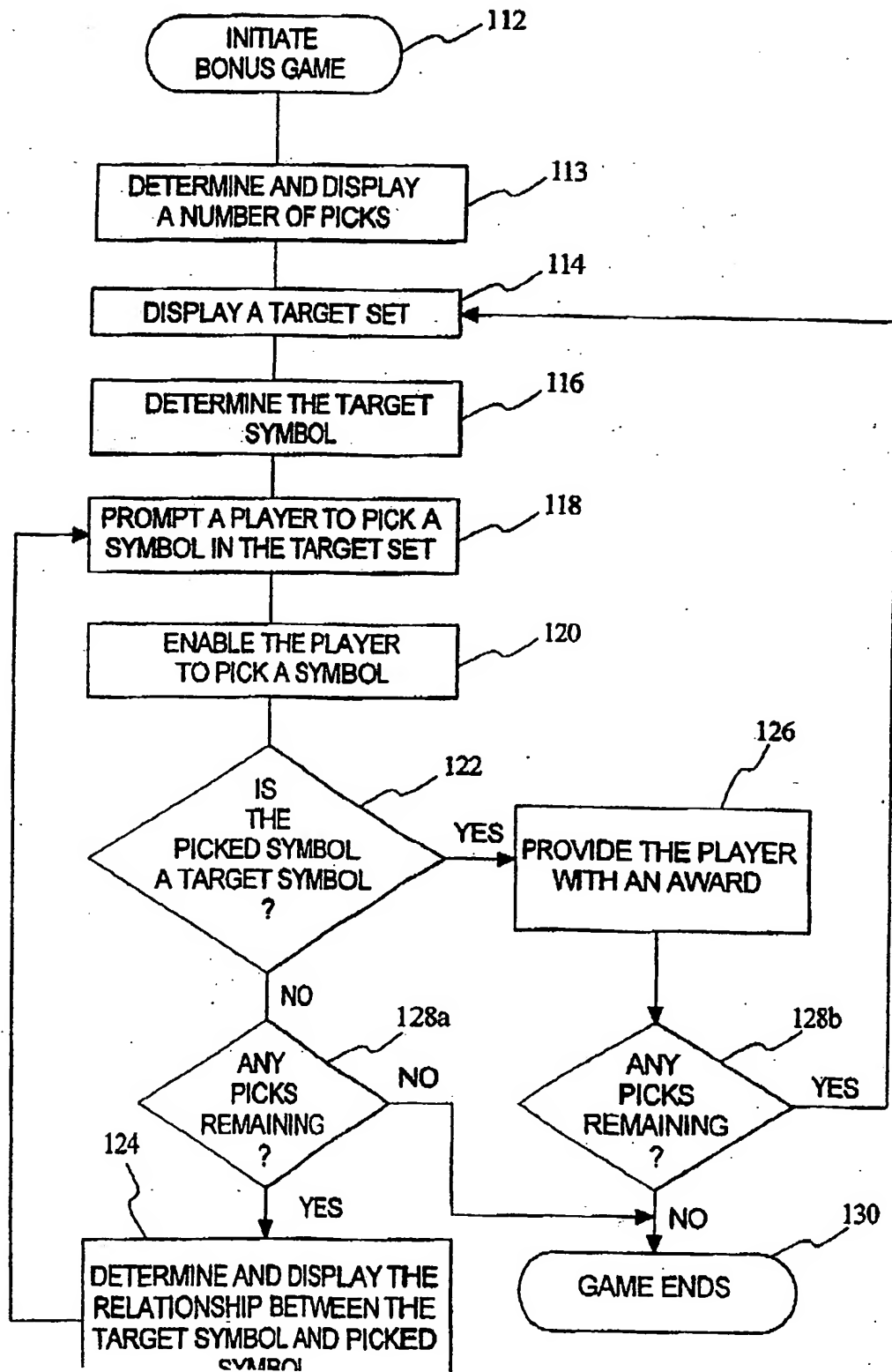


FIG 15A

30, 32

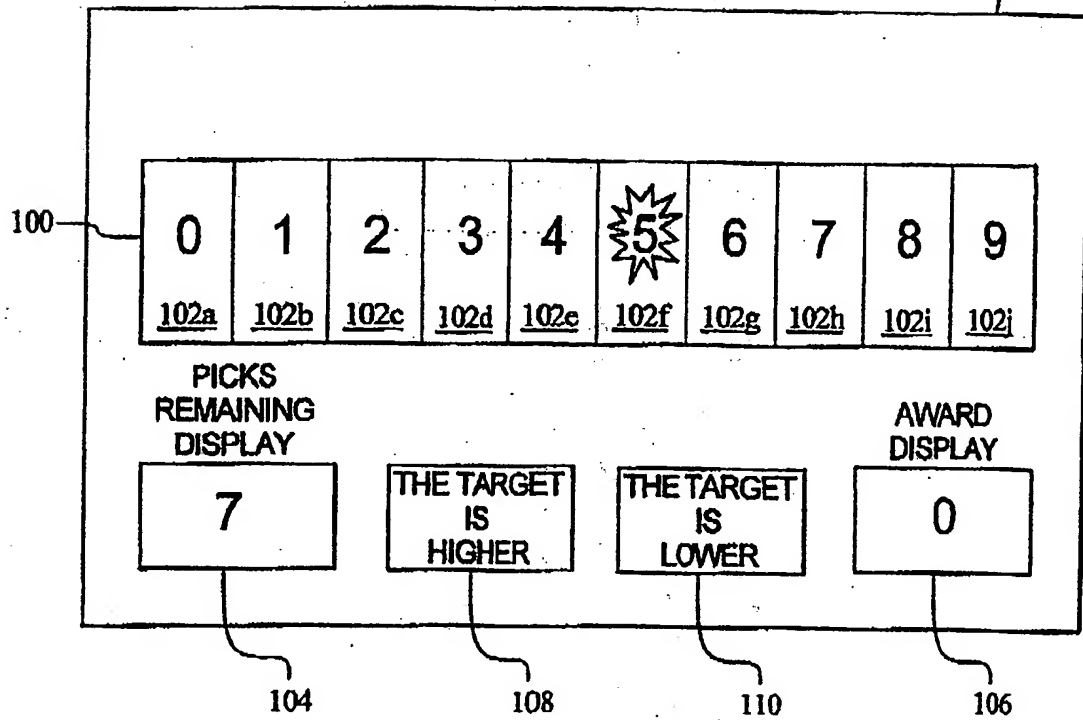


FIG 15B

30, 32

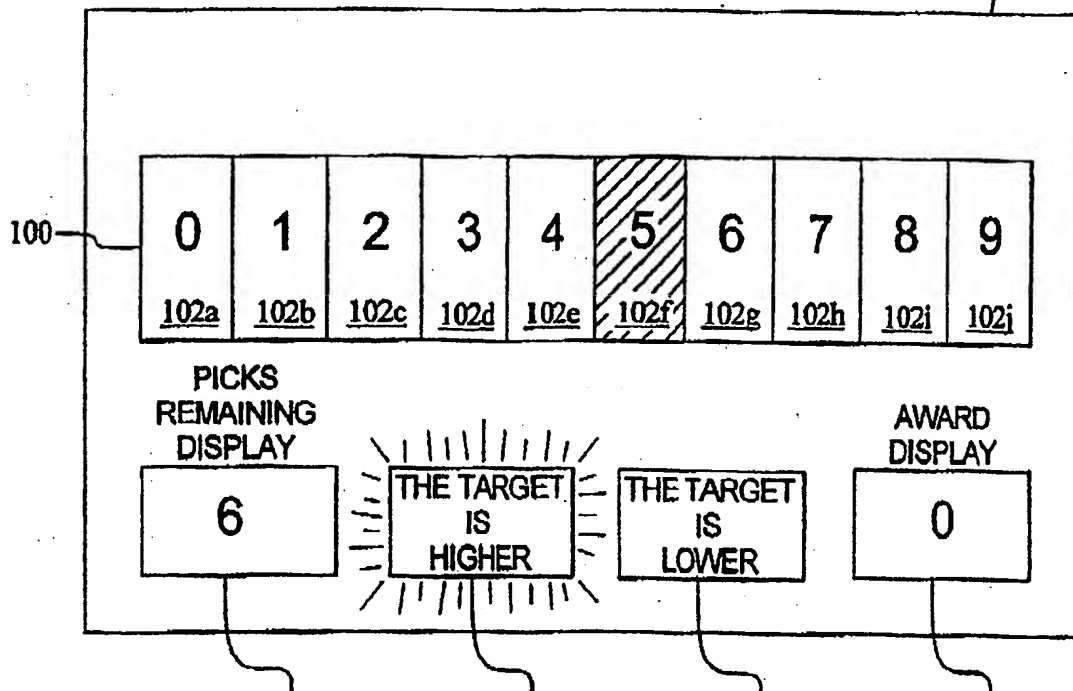


FIG 15C

30, 32

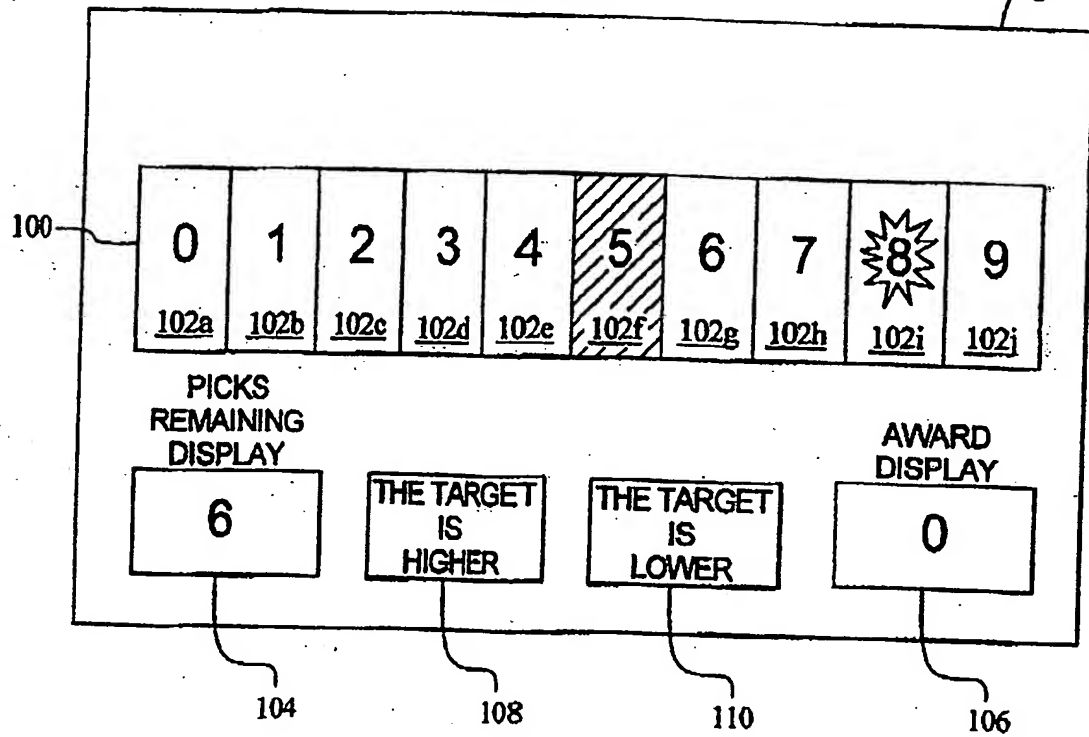


FIG 15D

30, 32

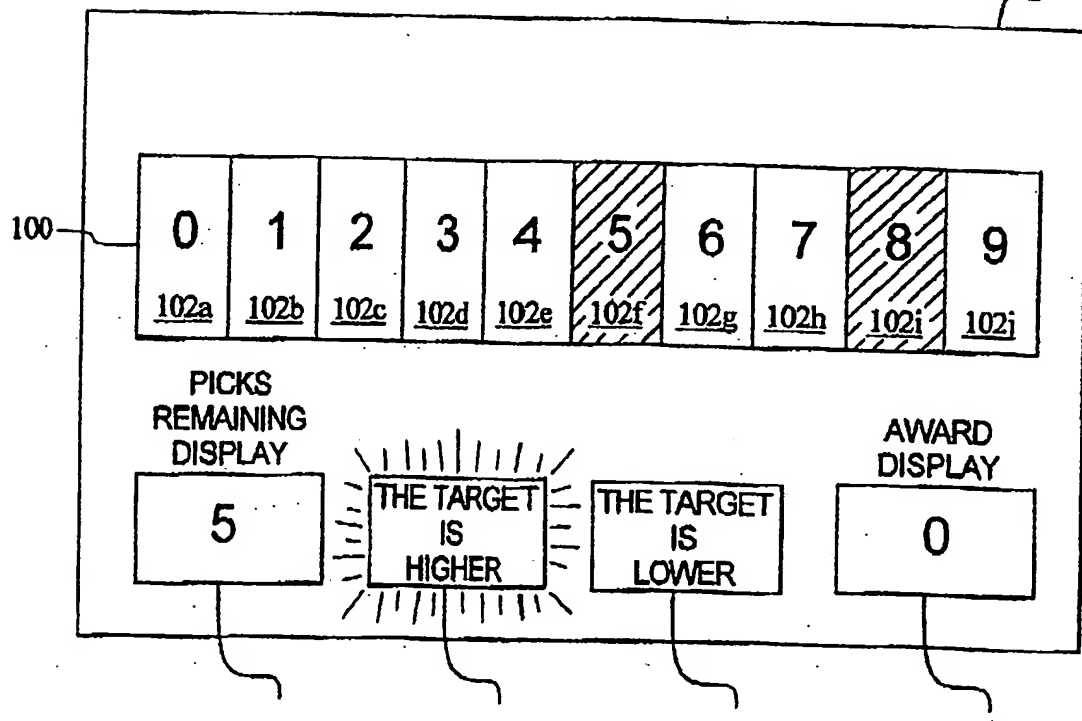


FIG 15E

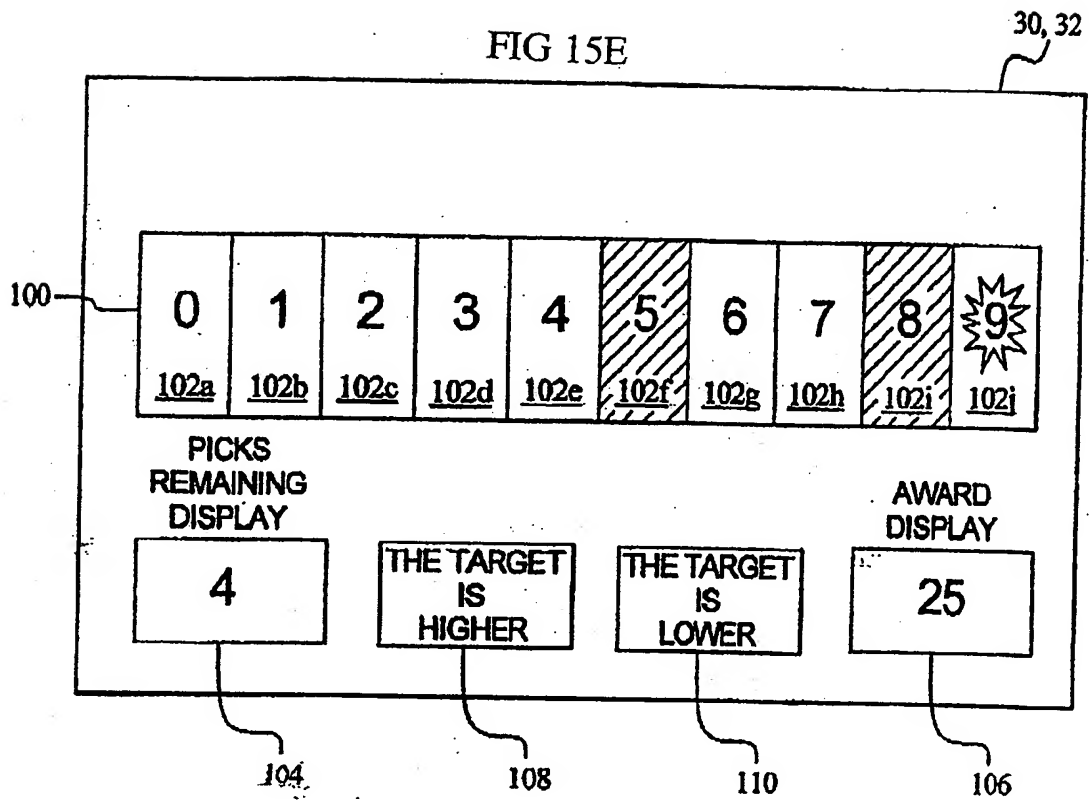


FIG 15F

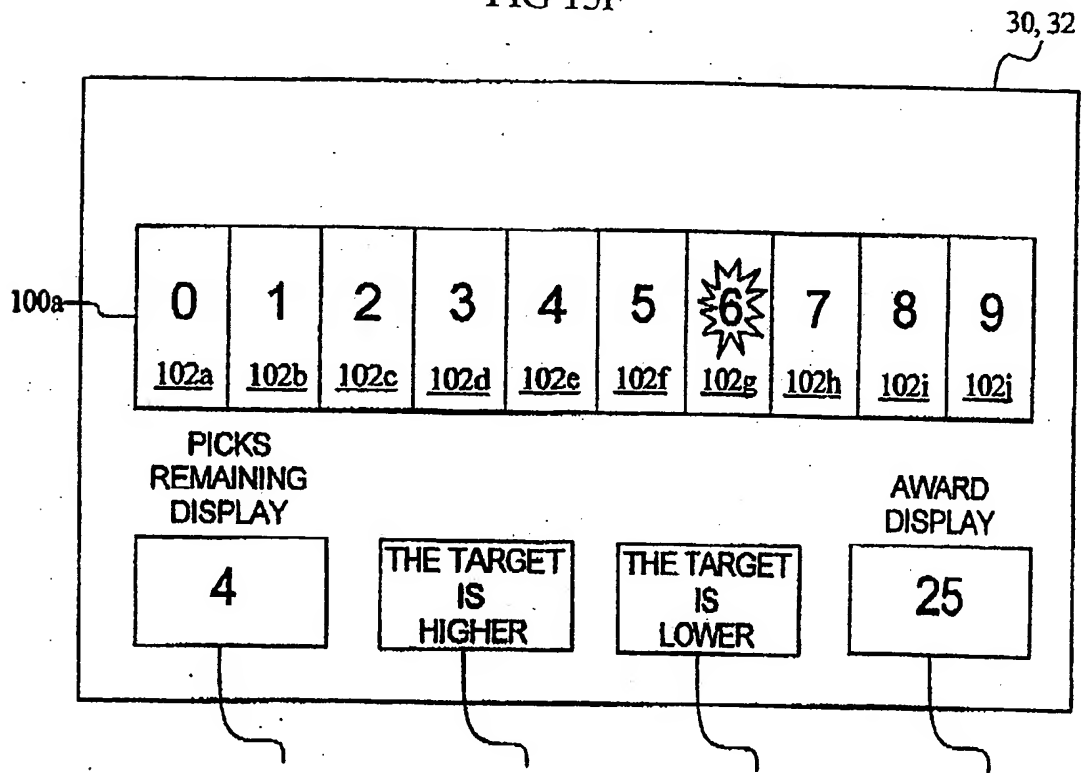


FIG 15G

30, 32

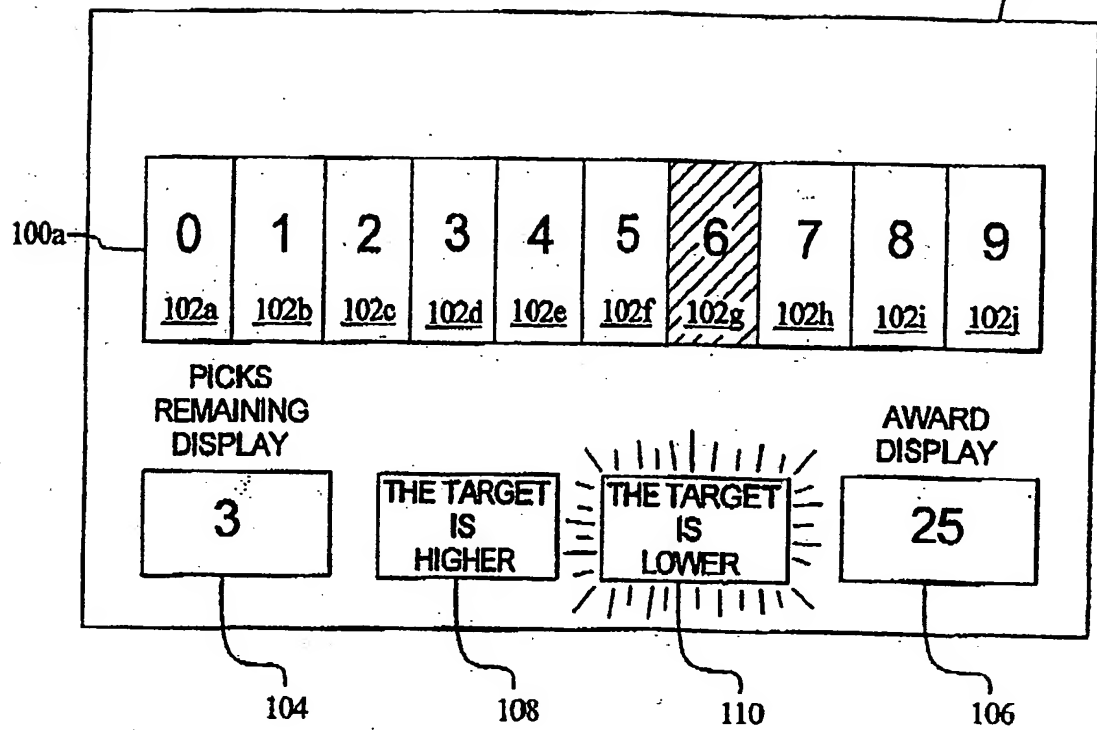


FIG 15H

30, 32

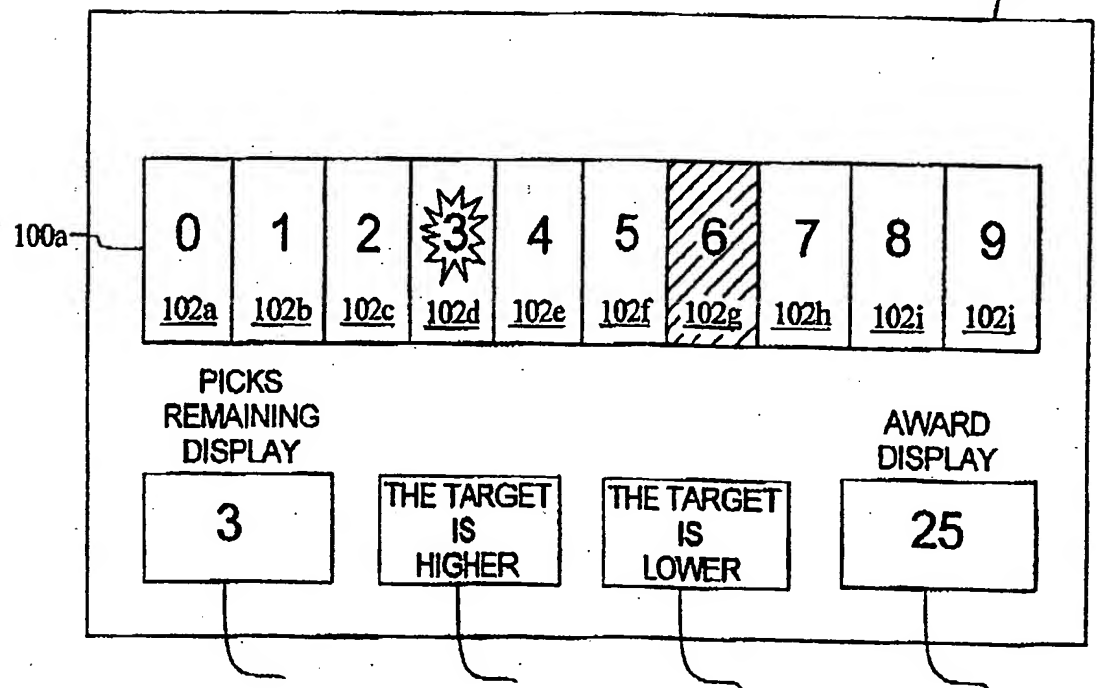


FIG 15I

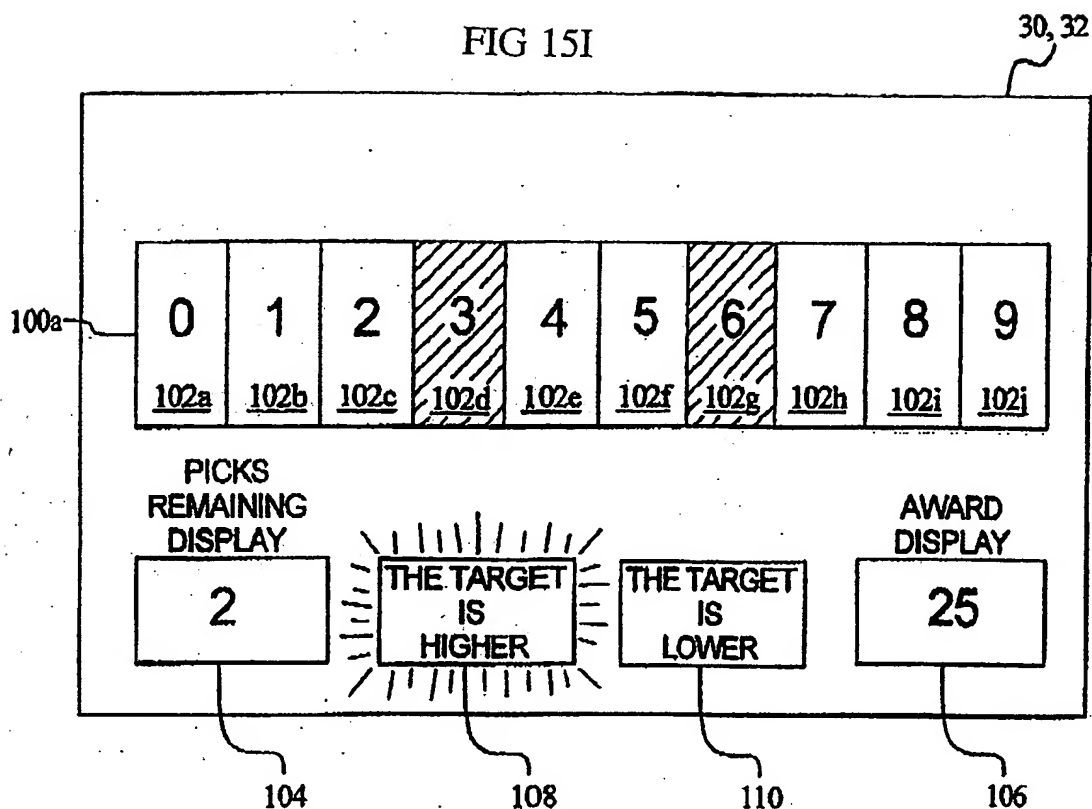


FIG 15J

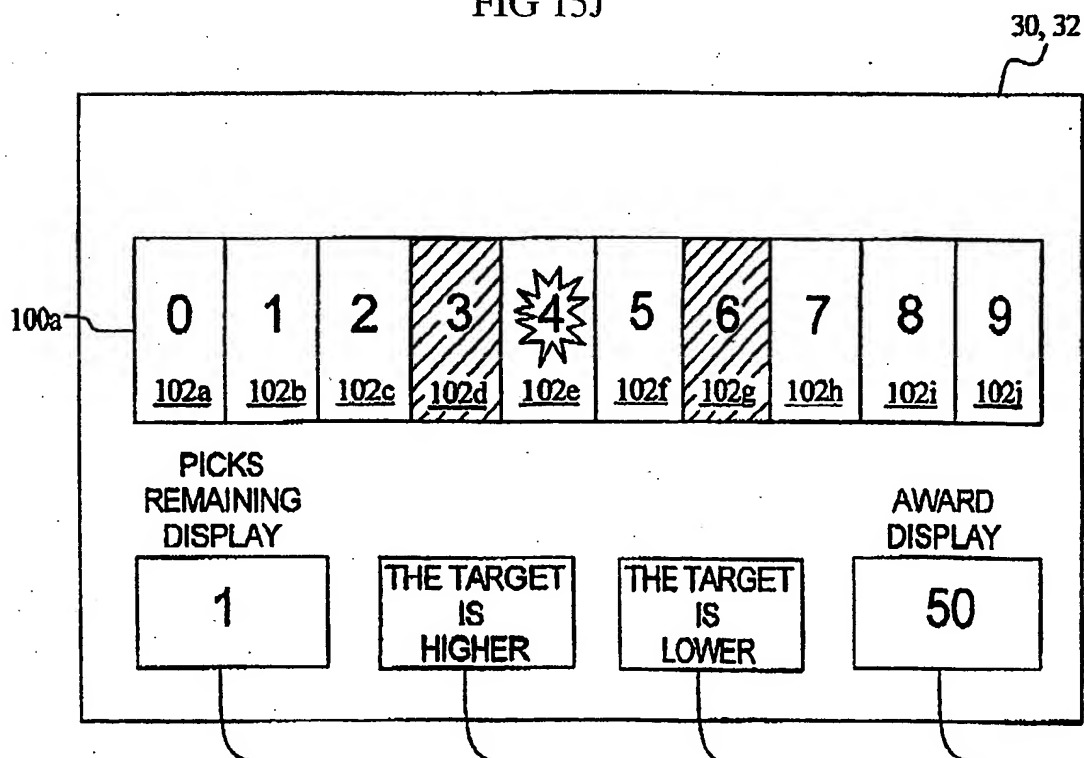


FIG. 15K

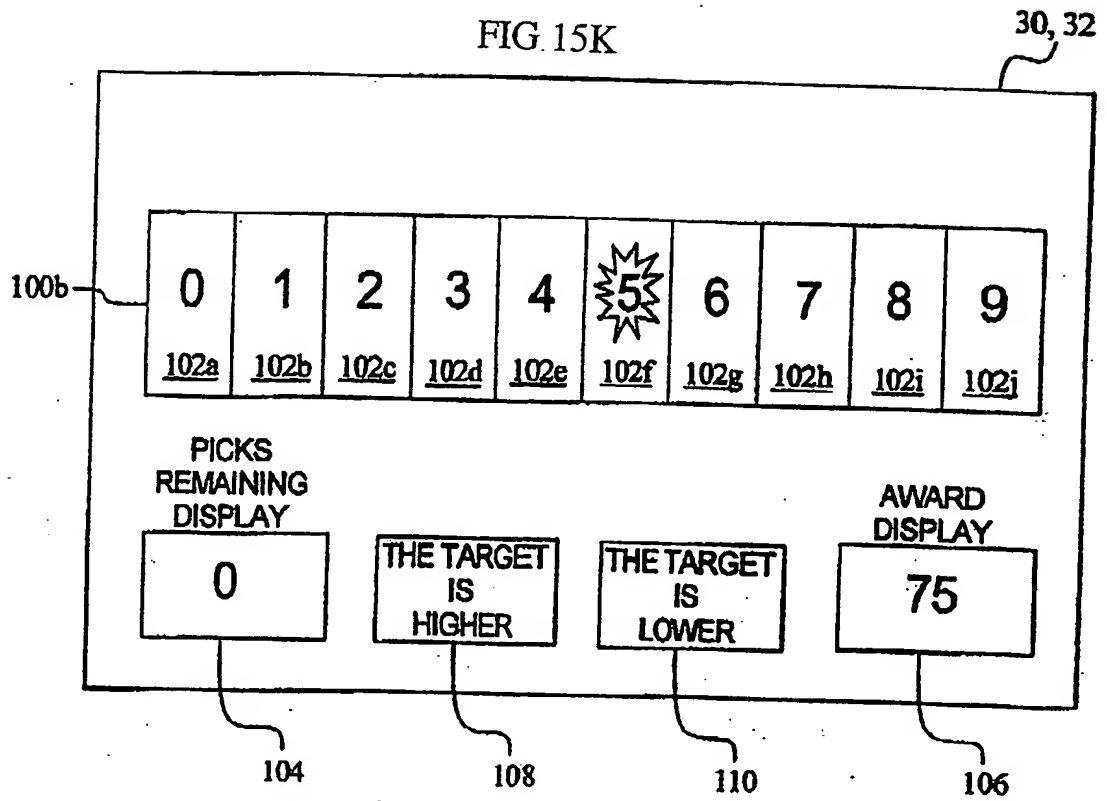


FIG. 16

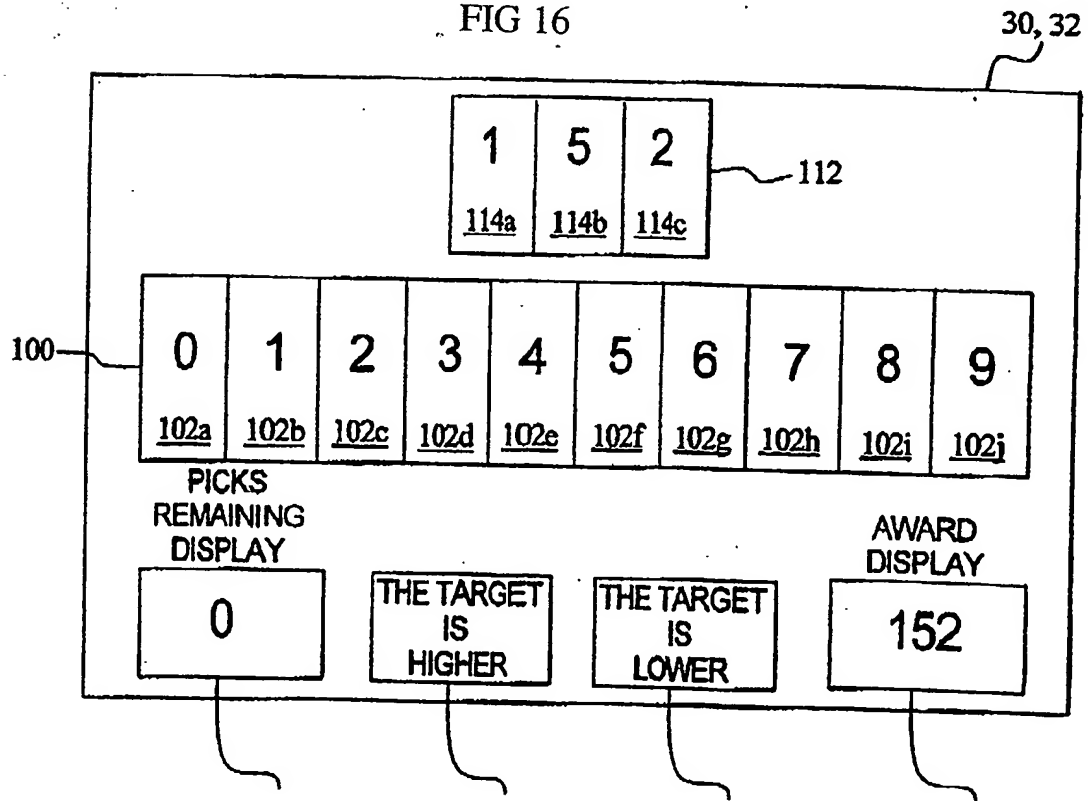


FIG 17

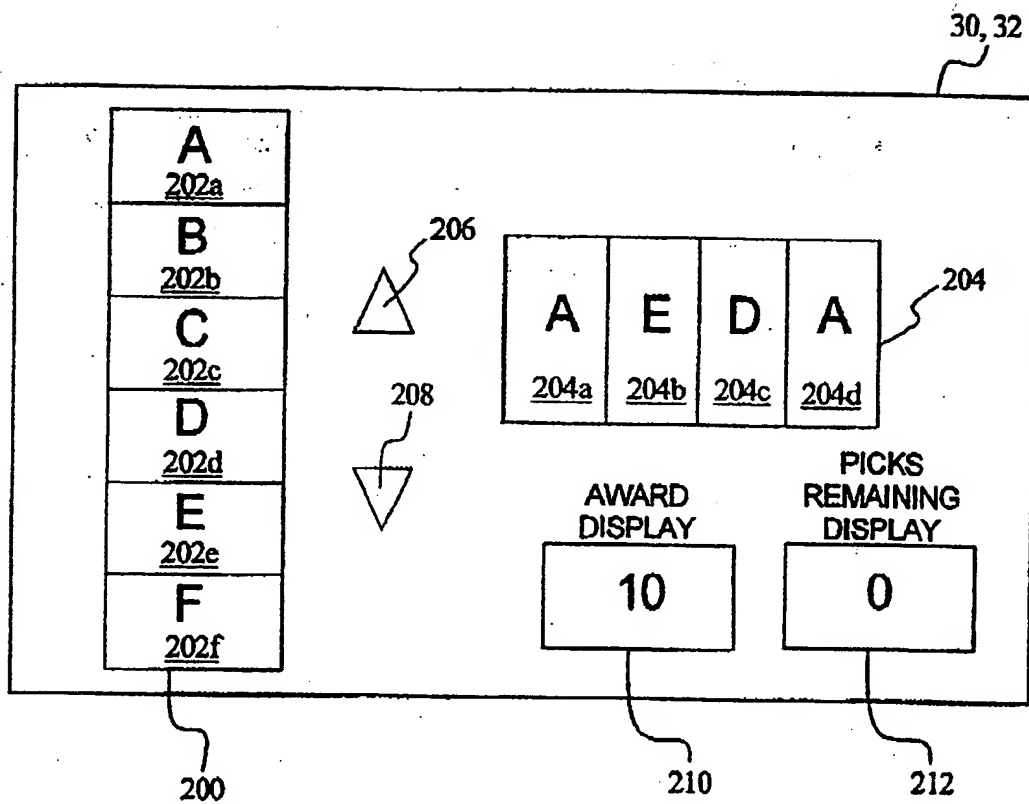
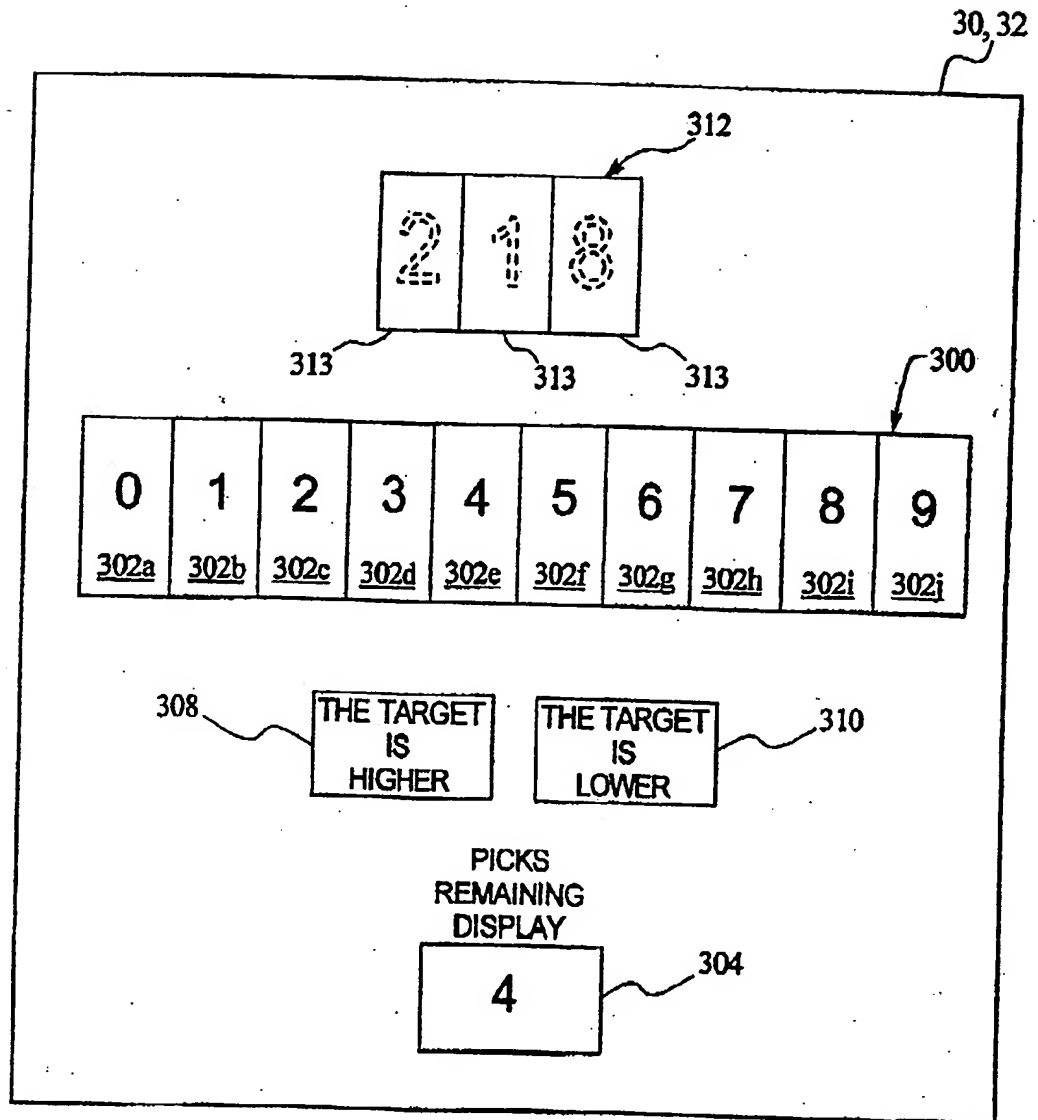


FIG 18



5

10 "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A PICK REDUCTION GAME"

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims priority from U.S. Patent Application No. 10/071,138, filed on February 8, 2002
15 entitled "Gaming Device Having a Related Symbol Selection Game," the specification of which is hereby included as Annex A to the description. The contents of Annex A and the Figures referred to therein forms part of the disclosure of the present invention.

20

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a gaming device having a pick reduction game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming
25 devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one known
30 method for enhancing player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the operation of the base game of the gaming device. The triggering event

temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the secondary or bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.

5 Bonus games exist that include reels having target symbols or target symbol combinations where the player receives a bonus award for obtaining the particular target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The bonus award may be a predetermined award or a random
10 award. In some bonus games, the bonus award is modified based on the number of attempts used by the player to obtain the target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The modified bonus award is provided to the player once the player obtains the target symbol or target
15 symbol combination on the reels.

One such bonus game is described in U.S. Patent No. 6,231,445, which is assigned to Acres Gaming, Inc. In this patent, several gaming machines having a plurality of reels are interconnected over a gaming network. Each of
20 the gaming machines displays a plurality of reels having various symbols to the player in a primary or base game. If the player obtains a predetermined winning combination of symbols on the reels after a spin, a bonus game is triggered and a bonus award is provided to start the bonus
25 game. In the bonus game, the bonus award immediately decreases after the first spin of the reels. Subsequently, the bonus award continues to decrease after each spin until the player obtains one of the winning symbols or winning symbol combinations on the reels. The player then
30 receives the modified bonus award.

Gaming devices that increase the opportunities to obtain awards and increase the size of the awards are desirable. Players are attracted to games that provide

several larger awards and the opportunity to obtain a very large award. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new games for gaming devices.

5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a gaming device having a pick reduction game and specifically, a bonus game. In one embodiment, primarily discussed herein, the gaming device displays a plurality of first selections, which are masked or hidden, to the player. Additionally, the gaming device displays a number of picks to the player. The number of picks is preferably greater than the number of first selections. However, in another embodiment, the number of picks may be equal to or less than the number of first selections.

The player uses the picks to pick selections from the plurality of first selections until the player picks a trigger selection. The number of picks are reduced by each pick by the player. Once the player obtains the trigger selection, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections to the player. The first and second selections may be displayed separately on the same display device or on different display devices, or the second selections may replace the first selections on the same display device. The player uses the remaining number of picks to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The plurality of second selections are associated with awards. Initially, the awards are masked or hidden from the player and an award is revealed after the player picks the second selection associated with that award. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's last pick or the player runs

out of picks before picking the trigger selection, the player receives a consolation award. In another embodiment such as in a primary game, the player does not receive any awards and the game ends.

5 In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with additional picks to choose second selections in the game. If the player has picks remaining after picking the trigger selection, the player also receives the additional picks to choose second selections
10 to receive extra awards. If the player does not have any picks remaining, the player just receives the additional picks and thereby has the minimum number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. In this embodiment, the player receives at least a minimum number of picks to
15 pick second selections and obtain awards in the bonus game.

The player's goal is to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections as quickly as possible so that the player has the maximum number of
20 picks to use to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The player uses the picks to choose second selections from the plurality of second selections and accumulates the awards associated with each of the second selections picked by the player. The total
25 accumulated award obtained by the player when the player has no picks remaining is the award provided to the player at the end of the bonus game. In one embodiment, the awards include at least one relatively large award. In this manner, the player still has an opportunity to obtain
30 the relatively large award, even if the player has only one pick to use to choose selections from the plurality of second selections.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a

bonus symbol is associated with one or more of the plurality of first selections and/or one or more of the plurality of second selections. The bonus symbol provides the player with a predetermined or random number of additional picks in the bonus game. The player may use the additional picks to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections and thereby receive more picks to choose selections from the plurality of second selections. Additionally, if the player picks the bonus symbol from the plurality of second selections, the player obtains additional picks and thereby receives more awards and possibly, a relatively large award. In a further embodiment, at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

15 In a further embodiment, relationship indicators are displayed to the player and associated with the plurality of first selections. In one embodiment, the relationship indicators automatically indicate the location or relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the player's last selection or pick from the plurality of first selections. In another embodiment, the player may choose to receive a "hint" by pressing a button or selector and use the relationship indicators to indicate the relative location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections. If the player chooses to use the "hint" and thereby the relationship indicators, the player in one embodiment will lose one or more picks to obtain this advantage. Otherwise, the player does not have to use the relationship indicators and may proceed as described above.

In still a further embodiment, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections, and the plurality of second selections displayed to the player by the gaming

device are displayed in various shapes, characters or symbols. Preferably, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections are designated with symbols or characters that are
5 associated with the theme of the game.

In an alternative embodiment, the first selections are displayed on a mechanical display. The selections on the mechanical display are covered by movable revealing members such as mechanical doors that move such as by
10 raising and lowering over the selections to reveal or hide the selections, respectively. In one aspect of this embodiment, the selections are displayed on a video display device and the mechanical doors slide over the display device. In another aspect of this embodiment, the
15 mechanical doors slide over mechanical reels, which spin to indicate one or more trigger selections.

In another alternative embodiment, a plurality of sets of first selections are displayed to a player. Each set includes at least one trigger selection.
20 Additionally, a picks remaining display is associated with each of the sets of first selections where a number of picks is indicated in each picks remaining display. The player uses the picks to pick first selections in each of the sets. The player continues to pick first selections
25 in each of the sets until the player picks the trigger selection in one or more of the sets or until there are no picks remaining in the sets. The number of picks indicated in each picks remaining display after the player is finished picking selections, is summed or totaled to
30 provide the player with a total number of picks remaining for the set of seconds selections. The player uses the total number of picks to choose second selections to obtain awards. Alternatively, the player must pick the

trigger in each set of first selections to get to the set of second selections. In further alternative embodiments, the player must pick the trigger selection in at least two of the sets of first selections, in one or more
5 specific sets, or in any desired combination of sets.

Although the present invention is primarily discussed relative to the bonus game of a gaming device, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

10 It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a pick reduction game that provides an opportunity for a player to obtain a large award.

Another advantage of the present invention is to
15 provide larger awards to players that increase player excitement and entertainment.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying
20 sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a front perspective view of one embodiment
25 of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 1B is a front perspective of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of
30 the present invention.

Figs. 3A and 3B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating one embodiment of the present invention.

Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first four picks by a player from a plurality of first selections where the player chooses the trigger selection with the player's final pick in the game.

Figs. 4F and 4G are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first and only pick by a player from a plurality of second selections where the player picks the relatively large award.

Figs. 5A and 5B are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections include a bonus symbol.

Fig. 6 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention where the bonus game includes relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Fig. 7 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the player has an option of using the relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Figs. 8A and 8B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the picks remaining display, plurality of first selections, and plurality of second selections are designated by different symbols.

Figs. 9A is an enlarged front elevation view of one

of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein mechanical doors cover the first selections and move or slide up and down to hide and reveal the first selections.

5 Fig. 9B is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the mechanical doors of Fig. 9A cover mechanical reels that display the first selections.

10 Fig. 10 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention wherein multiple sets of first selections are displayed to a player.

15 Figs. 11A, 11B, 12-14, 15A-15K and 16 to 18 are described in Annex A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

20 Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10.

25 Gaming device 10 in one embodiment has the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted in a cabinet. However, it should be appreciated
30 that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display

designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming
5 device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game
10 such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, and any of the bonus triggering events and bonus games associated with these primary games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

15 As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be
20 used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of
25 money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also
30 includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player

pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. Other bet or wager indicators such as a bet max button may
5 also be employed in the gaming device of present invention.

A player may cash out and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player cashes out,
10 the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

15 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. Gaming device 10 in
20 one embodiment displays a plurality of reels 34 such as three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not
25 limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video
30 form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor. Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably

correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for producing sounds such as music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. One or more secondary processors may also be employed in conjunction with the primary processor to control certain aspects of the game function. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen

50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money
5 in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific
10 integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to
15 provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40
20 are generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10, in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12
25 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop,
30 the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, in one embodiment gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of

gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begins a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use mechanical devices or a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. In one embodiment, the qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 initiates the secondary or bonus game of the present invention. Referring now to Figs. 3A and 3B, the bonus game includes a plurality of first selections 100 and a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of first selections or first selection set 100 includes at least two masked first selections 102. In Fig. 3A, there are four masked first selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. At least one trigger selection 102c is associated with one of the masked selections 102. The trigger selection may be designated with any symbol or character preferred by the game implementor to indicate that a particular selection is the trigger selection. A number of picks is associated with the plurality of first selections 100, as indicated

by the picks remaining display 104. Once the bonus game is initiated, the gaming device displays the plurality of first selections 100 and a number of picks in the picks remaining display 104.

5 In one embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is at least one less than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. Accordingly, the player will always have at least one remaining pick after
10 obtaining the trigger selection to choose at least one of the second selections. Therefore, the player will always have an opportunity or chance to obtain the relatively large award associated with the second selection even though the probability of obtaining that award is lower
15 than if the player has a larger number of picks.

 In another embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is equal to or greater than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. In this
20 embodiment, the player may obtain the trigger selection with the player's last pick or run out of picks before picking the trigger selection. In either case, the player does not have any picks remaining in the game and therefore, the player cannot pick from the plurality of
25 second selections. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's final pick or the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger selection in the bonus game, the player receives a consolation award and the bonus game ends. The consolation
30 award may be any award including, but not limited to, free spins, free games, multipliers and credits. In another embodiment, the game ends and the player does not receive any awards in the game. This game may be best suited for

a primary game where the player does not necessarily obtain an award in each game as is typical in bonus games. In such primary games a wager would be placed on the set of first selections. The amount of the wager could also
5 determine the number of picks in the first selections and/or additional picks in the second selections. Additionally, the amount of the wager could determine the number of sets of first selections provided to the player in the game. Varying the number of trigger selections
10 and/or the number of first selection sets varies the probability that the player will initiate the bonus game and thereby increases the players excitement and enjoyment of the game. It should also be appreciated that the number of first selections and the number of picks may
15 vary in a game.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with an additional number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. If the player picks the trigger selection before running out of picks in the
20 primary game, the player will also receive additional picks to choose second selections to obtain extra awards in the bonus game. If the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection in the primary game, the player receives only the additional picks and thus,
25 still has a minimum number of picks to choose second selections.

In a bonus game, the player uses the picks provided to the player by the gaming device to pick selections from the plurality of first selections 100. The player
30 continues to pick one of the selections 102 from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c. Once the player picks the trigger selection 102c, the gaming device displays a

plurality of second selections 200 to the player. In one embodiment, the second selections are displayed separately from the first selections on the same display device or on different display devices. In another embodiment, the
5 second selections replace the first selections on the same display device.

The player receives the number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 after the player picks the trigger selection 102c. In this example, the player
10 receives the maximum number of picks possible, which is one less than the number of picks provided to the player at the beginning of the game, if the player selects the trigger selection with the player's first pick. In any event, the player receives at least one pick if the player
15 selects or picks the trigger selection 102c with the final pick.

In Fig. 3B, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200 that include several selections 202a to 202l. Each selection 202 is associated with an award
20 203. Initially, all of the awards 203 are masked or hidden from the player. Once the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200, the award 203 that is associated with the picked selection is revealed or shown to the player. In
25 one embodiment, the awards 203 include a plurality of relatively small awards and one relatively large award. In Fig. 3B, the relatively large award is illustrated in selection 202k, which includes an award of five thousand. It should be appreciated that the awards 203 associated
30 with the selections 202 may include a plurality of relatively small awards, a plurality of relatively large awards, or any combination therein. Additionally, the number of selections 202 in the plurality of second

selections 200 may include any number of selections as desired by the game implementor. In one embodiment, the number of selections 202 and the plurality of second selections 200 is equal to or greater than the number of first selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100. It should be appreciated that the number of first selections 100 and the number of second selections 200 may include the same number or a different number of selections.

10 A picks remaining display 204 initially indicates the number of picks transferred from the picks remaining display 104 that the player received by picking the trigger selection 102c. In one embodiment, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 reduces
15 by one each time the player picks a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. In other embodiments, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 decreases or increases by a predetermined or random number of picks. The total award display 206
20 indicates the accumulated award received by the player based on the awards that are revealed after each pick of a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200 by the player. The total award indicated by the total award display 206 when the player runs out of picks is the
25 total award provided to the player for that game.

Referring now to Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E, an example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device displays four selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d in a plurality of
30 first selections 100 to the player. As shown in Fig. 4A, the gaming device provides the player with five picks, as indicated by the picks remaining display 104, to begin the game. Thus, the player may receive a maximum of four

picks if the player obtains or picks the trigger selection with the player's first pick in the game. The minimum number of picks that the player can receive is one pick where the player picks the trigger selection with the
5 final pick in the game.

In Fig. 4B, the player picks selection 102c with the first pick in the bonus game. The selection 102c is not the trigger selection, however, and therefore the player must make another pick from the plurality of first
10 selections 100. The number of picks is reduced by one, from five to four.

Referring to Fig. 4C, the player now has four picks left in the game as indicated by the picks remaining display 104. Therefore, if the player picks the trigger
15 selection with this pick, the player will receive three picks to use when choosing selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. The player picks selection 102a with the second pick. Unfortunately, the selection 102a is not the trigger selection. The number
20 of picks is reduced by one, from four to three, and the player must make another pick from the plurality of first selections 100.

In Fig. 4D, the player picks again from the plurality of first selections 100 in the bonus game. With the third
25 pick, the player picks selection 102d from the plurality of first selections 100. The selection 102d is still not the trigger selection. Therefore, the number of picks is reduced by one again, from three to two, and now there is only one selection 102b remaining in the plurality of
30 first selections 100.

In one embodiment, the trigger selection 102b, which is the only remaining selection available to the player, is revealed to the player automatically. Thus, the player

receives the minimum number of picks which, in this example, is one, to pick selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Even though the player received the minimum number of picks, one, the player still has an
5 opportunity to pick or receive a relatively large award in the bonus game. Therefore, the probability that the player will pick the relatively large award with only one pick is less than if the player had more picks remaining. However, the player still has a slight probability or
10 chance to pick the relatively large award, which creates player excitement.

Referring to Fig. 4E, the player automatically receives the trigger selection 102b as described above. Thus, the player has one pick to use to pick a selection
15 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Once the player obtains the trigger selection 102b, the gaming device displays the plurality of second selections 200 to the player and also transfers the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 104 to the picks
20 remaining display 204, which is associated with the plurality of second selections 200.

Referring now to Figs. 4F and 4G, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of awards 203 (not shown) are associated with
25 the second selections 200. The awards are initially masked to the player and are revealed when the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of selections 200. In Fig. 4F, the player uses the player's only pick to pick selection 202d from the plurality of
30 second selections 200. Fortunately, the player picks the selection associated with the relatively large award of five thousand. The player does not have any picks remaining and therefore the bonus game ends. However, the

player did pick and obtain the largest single award of five thousand in the bonus game. This award is transferred to the total award display 206 and is provided to the player because the bonus game has ended.

5 This example illustrates how the present invention maintains the level of excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game by enabling players to always have a chance or opportunity of obtaining the relatively large award or the single largest award in the game. After the bonus game
10 begins, the player's odds or chances for obtaining the relatively large award decrease after each pick by the player from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player obtains the trigger selection. However, the player still has a slight probability or chance of
15 obtaining the relatively large award even though the player may have only one pick to choose one of the second selections 200. Thus, the odds of obtaining the relatively large award in the bonus game decrease, but never reach zero, and thereby players always have a chance
20 to obtain the relatively large award.

Referring now to Figs. 5A and 5B, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where a bonus symbol 106 is associated with at least one of the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100.
25 In one embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more additional picks to the player if the player picks the selection 102 associated with the bonus symbol 106. In another embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more multipliers to the player.

30 In Fig. 5A, the bonus symbol is designated by a star. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol may be any symbol, character, or shape as desired by the game implementor. Also, the bonus symbol may provide the

player with additional picks, a multiplier which multiplies the present number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 or modifies the picks in some other suitable manner. The bonus symbol may also be
5 associated with at least one of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200 wherein the bonus symbol may provide additional picks, multipliers or other modifiers to the player.

In Fig. 5B, the bonus symbol 208 is associated with
10 selection 202f. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol 208 may be associated with one or more of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200. In one embodiment, the bonus symbol 208 provides an additional pick to the player from the plurality of second
15 selections 200 when the player picks the selection 202 associated with the bonus symbol 208. The bonus symbol, therefore, enables the player to obtain additional picks in the bonus game and potentially receive extra awards and larger awards in the bonus game. In a further embodiment,
20 at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

Referring now to Fig. 6, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the plurality of
25 first selections are arranged in a column. Two relationship indicators, designated as an upward facing arrow 106a and a downward facing arrow 106b, indicate the relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the selection picked by the player. For example, if the
30 trigger selection is selection 102a and the player picks selection 102c, the gaming device illuminates or highlights the relationship indicator 106a to indicate that the trigger selection is higher than or above the

picked selection 102c. Likewise, if the trigger selection is lower or below the picked selection 102c, the relationship indicator or downward facing arrow 106b is illuminated or highlighted by the gaming device. The relationship indicators enable the player to identify the relative location of the trigger selection more quickly and therefore enables the player to potentially receive more picks to use for picking selections from the plurality of second selections 200 (not shown).

10 Referring to Fig. 7, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the relationship indicators 110a and 110b indicate whether the target is higher or the target is lower than a picked selection, respectively. It should be appreciated that the relationship indicators 110a and 110b may include words, phrases, characters or other designations that indicate the relationship of the trigger selection to the picked selection by the player.

In this embodiment, a player selectable button or selector 108 is also displayed to the player. The button or selector 108 is designated with the question "HINT?" to enable the player to choose whether they want to receive an indication of the location of the trigger selection. If the player decides to receive a hint from the gaming device about the location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections 100, the player presses or selects the button or selector 108. Then, one of the relationship indicators 110a or 110b is illuminated or highlighted to indicate the relationship of the trigger selection to the last picked selection by the player.

In one embodiment, the gaming device deducts one or more picks from the player's total picks for providing the player with a hint or indication of the relative location

of the trigger selection. In this manner, the player may use the relationship indicators to try to obtain the trigger selection more quickly. However, if the player does not obtain the trigger selection after receiving the
5 hint, the player sacrifices additional picks. The player may opt not to receive any hints in the bonus game and proceed with selecting the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 as described above. The hint button or selector 108 give the player the opportunity to
10 receive more picks than the player might receive if the player picked the selections without any hints.

Referring now to Figs. 8A and 8B, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the number of picks, the plurality of first selections 100
15 and the plurality of second selections 200 are displayed as different shapes or symbols. This embodiment shows that the number of picks 105 may be a number displayed in a display such as the picks remaining display 104 illustrated in Figs. 3A to 7, a number as shown in
20 Fig. 8A, or some other designation as desired by the game implementor. In Fig. 8A, the gaming device highlights or illuminates the remaining number of picks in the bonus game at any given time in the bonus game. Additionally, the plurality of first selections 100 and the plurality of
25 second selections 200 may be any shape, character, symbol or other designation as desired.

In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Figs. 9A and 9B, the first selections 100 are displayed on a mechanical display. In Fig. 9A, the trigger selection is
30 displayed on a display device such as a video display device and mechanical doors 208 cover the display device. Each selection 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d is covered by a mechanical door 208, which moves or slides up and down to

reveal or hide the selections, respectively. The doors 208 move or slide within channels (not shown) or similar devices that are connected to the gaming device. After the player picks a selection, such as selection 102c, the door 208 associated with that selection slides upward or opens to reveal that selection. Once the player picks the trigger selection or when the player runs out of picks, any doors 208 that are in the open or upward position, drop down to cover or hide the selections.

10 In Fig. 9B, the doors 208 cover mechanical reels 34, which include a plurality of symbols having the trigger selection. Initially, the doors 208 are closed or cover the reels 34. The gaming device spins or activates the reels 34. Once the reels stop spinning, one or more
15 symbols are indicated on the reels where one of the symbols represents the trigger selection. The player picks the selections 102 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c or until the player runs out of picks. The doors 208 move upward, or open, to reveal the
20 selections 102 after the player picks the selections, and close or lower when the game ends as described above. It should be appreciated that any suitable covering or revealing panel or member could be employed to reveal the selections.

25 In another alternative embodiment illustrated in Fig. 10, several sets of first selections 100a, 100b and 100c are displayed to the player in the bonus game. Additionally, the sets of first selections are associated with picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c. In
30 this illustration, the first set of first selections 100a includes selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. The second set of first selections 100b includes selections 102e, 102f, 102g and 102h. The third set of first selections

includes selections 102i, 102j, 102k and 102l. It should be appreciated that any number of selection sets 100 and associated picks remaining displays 104 may be displayed to the player. It should also be appreciated that any
5 number of selections 102 may be included in the selection sets 100.

In this alternative embodiment, the selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 are initially masked or hidden from the player. Each picks remaining display
10 104a, 104b and 104c indicates a number of picks to be used to choose selections in the associated selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c. It should be appreciated that the picks remaining displays 104 may indicate the same number of picks, a different number of picks or any combination
15 therein. The player picks selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102b, 102h and 102i in each of the selection sets, or until the player runs out of picks for one or more of the selection sets. In one embodiment, the number
20 of picks remaining for each of the selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c is indicated in the corresponding picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c, after the player is finished picking selections in the selection sets, is summed or totaled and indicated in the total picks
25 remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that the individual number of picks associated with each set of first selections may be added, multiplied or combined in any manner as desired to achieve the total number of picks remaining in the game.

30 The total number of picks indicated in total picks remaining display 210 is the number of picks provided to the player to choose second selections to obtain awards. For example in Fig. 10, the number of picks indicated in

picks remaining display 104a is two, the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104b is zero and the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104c is one. Therefore, the total number of picks available to
5 the player to pick second selections in the game is three, as indicated by the total picks remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that other suitable methods may be used with the plurality of first selection sets to obtain picks in the second selection sets. For example in one
10 embodiment, the player must pick the trigger selection in all of the first selection sets to obtain picks for the second selections. Similarly, in other embodiments, the player must pick at least two of the trigger selections, specific trigger selections or any combination therein to
15 obtain picks for the second selections.

While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the
20 disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from
25 the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.

ANNEX A

GAMING DEVICE HAVING A RELATED SYMBOL SELECTION GAME

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming
10 devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one way to
15 enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having a secondary or bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the base game operation of the gaming device. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts further base game play
20 and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives a bonus award, and returns to the base game.

Currently, gaming machines or devices such as slot
25 machines provide bonus games wherein a player has one or more opportunities to select one or more symbols from a plurality of possible symbols. If the player selects one of the designated winning symbols or a winning combination of symbols, the game awards the player a bonus value such
30 as credits. The outcome depends upon the particular symbol or symbols obtained by the player. If the player selects a terminating symbol, the game ends.

One known gaming device is the SPELLBINDER™ gaming

device. For the bonus game of the SPELLBINDER™ gaming device, the gaming device displays the numbers one to twelve to a player. The gaming device selects one of the numbers from the set of numbers. The gaming device
5 requires the player to input whether the player believes that the next number will be higher or lower than the selected number. If the player picked correctly, the gaming device provides an award to the player and repeats the process. If the player does not pick correctly, the
10 bonus game ends.

Other various bonus games have been associated with gaming machines. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new bonus games for gaming machines.

15

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device and in particular a secondary or bonus game of a gaming device that includes at least one target set. The target set has
20 a plurality of symbols including at least one symbol which is randomly designated to be the target symbol. The gaming device enables a player to pick symbols from the target set until the player selects the target symbol or runs out of picks. In one embodiment, the player receives
25 a predetermined number of picks when the game begins. After the player picks a symbol, a relationship indicator identifies the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. If the picked symbol is not (or does not match) the target symbol, the
30 relationship indicator indicates the relationship of the target symbol to the picked symbol. The player continues to pick symbols from the target set until the player obtains the target symbol or runs out of picks.

Preferably, the player receives an award for picking the randomly designated target symbol. It should be appreciated that the number of or type of target symbols in each target set may vary. Also, the target symbols may
5 be the same symbols, different symbols or any combination of symbols in each bonus game.

In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a plurality of target sets and provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in each set. In one
10 embodiment, the player has a total cumulative number of picks the player can use in selecting symbols in all of the target sets. Each target symbol is associated with an award and the player's total award is based on the sum of the individual awards for each picked target symbol. It
15 should also be appreciated that the processor or controller of the gaming device could randomly determine the awards for the target symbols. In accord with one aspect of the invention, each award is associated with a probability of being associated with a target symbol such
20 that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to the player based on the target symbols picked by the player. In one such embodiment, the symbols in each
25 target set are numbers, such as the integers from zero to nine, and the target symbol is one of the numbers. When the player picks the target number, the gaming device uses the picked target number to determine the player's award. In one embodiment, the player receives the sum of the
30 awards associated with each picked target symbol in a target set or sets. In an alternative embodiment, the player could receive an award or combined award based on completing an award combination. In this alternative

embodiment, the award or combined award is a combination of the target numbers. The combination is formed by placing the target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked or alternatively, in another suitable order. Each picked target number makes up a digit of the combined award. If the player picks several target numbers, the player's award is an order of the digits of the target numbers.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with a number of picks. The gaming device also displays a masked combination of target numbers. The combination is formed by randomly selecting and placing target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked by the processor or in another suitable order. The combination may also be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number makes up a digit in the combination. If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award to the player. The award in one embodiment is based on the number of picks that the player has remaining. In one alternative embodiment, the player uses the player's remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards.

In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target symbols in a target combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target

symbol combination.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the gaming device increases because the player does not know when the player's picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

Although the present invention is discussed relative to a bonus game of a gaming machine, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

20

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 11A is front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 11B is front perspective view of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 12 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 13 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B, which illustrates one embodiment of the present invention where the symbols in the target set are numbers.

Fig. 14 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of the

present invention implemented in a bonus game.

Figs. 15A and 15B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by a player in a target set and
5 the response by the gaming device.

Figs. 15C and 15D are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by a player in the target set and the response by the gaming device.

10 Fig. 15E is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by a player in the target set, which is the target symbol, and an award associated with the target symbol.

15 Figs. 15F and 15G are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by the player in a new target set, which is the fourth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

20 Figs. 15H and 15I are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by the player in the target set, which is the fifth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

25 Fig. 15J is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by the player in the target set, which is the sixth overall pick in the bonus game, that results in a second target symbol and an award.

30 Fig. 15K is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick in a new target set, which is the seventh overall and final selection in the bonus game, that

results in a third target symbol and an award.

Fig. 16 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the
5 bonus game award equals the value of a target symbol combination.

Fig. 17 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention.

10 Fig. 18 is an enlarged front elevation view of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention wherein the bonus game includes a target symbol combination.

15 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B as gaming device 10a and gaming device
20 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 is in one embodiment a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a
25 player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted on a console or cabinet. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while
30 sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 11A and 11B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a

detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other storage or memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop
5 personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of their bonus games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be
10 in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

As illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket
15 vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit
20 display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

25 As shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player
30 pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. The gaming device can also include other conventional

wagoring indicators such as a bet max button

A player may "cash out" and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player "cashes
5 out," the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

10 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 11A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 11B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. The illustrated
15 gaming device 10 displays a plurality of reels 34 (i.e., five reels 34) in video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of
20 physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display
25 device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor.

Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated
30 with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper
5 display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as
10 images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for
15 storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20,
20 the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen
25 controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 12, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12
30 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38

and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or individually referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 is generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 11A, 11B and 12, to operate the gaming device 10 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. In the slot embodiment, the reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, gaming device 10 may also give players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use a video-based central display

device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. The qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 automatically initiates the bonus game of the present invention.

Referring to Fig. 13, one embodiment of the display device 30 or 32 of the present invention is illustrated. The display device 30 or 32 displays a target set 100 including a plurality of player selectable symbols 102a to 102j (generally referred to as symbols 102). At least one of the symbols 102 in the target set 100 is randomly determined by the processor as the target symbol for each play of the bonus game. Although this embodiment shows one target set, it should be appreciated that in other embodiments, a bonus game may include multiple target sets. In such an embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick a symbol in each target set. The gaming device provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in the target sets.

In the illustrated embodiment, the symbols are numbers and particularly integers from zero to nine. The symbols, however, may be any suitable symbols as desired.

Also, the numbers are preferably displayed in sequential order starting with the lowest value on the left to the highest value on the right. It should be appreciated that any logical order may be displayed to a player based on
5 the symbols being used in the bonus game. The order of the symbols (i.e., zero to nine) in this embodiment illustrates the relationship of the symbols to one another.

The display device includes a picks remaining display
10 104, an award display 106 and relationship indicators 108 and 110.

The picks remaining display 104 indicates the number of picks that are remaining in a bonus game. At the start of a game, the gaming device determines the total number
15 of picks for that bonus game and displays the number of picks in the picks remaining display 104. The picks remaining display 104 decreases by one after each pick by a player. Thus, at any point in the game, the player knows how many picks are remaining in that game and may
20 adjust the player's strategy accordingly. When the picks remaining display indicates that there are no picks remaining in a game, the bonus game ends.

The award display 106 indicates the total award received by a player in the bonus game. During a bonus
25 game, any awards received by a player are added to the award indicated by the award display 106. Once a bonus game ends, the total award indicated by the award display 106 is provided to the player.

30 The relationship indicators 108 and 110, indicate the relationship between a picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. In the illustrated embodiment in Fig. 13, the target set 100 includes ten symbols 102a to 102j,

designated with the numbers zero through nine. Since the target set includes numbers, the relationship indicators 108 or 110 indicate whether a target number is higher or lower than a picked number in a target set. If the target number is higher than a picked number, the relationship indicator 108 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this relationship to the player. If the target number is lower than a picked number, the relationship indicator 110 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this relationship to the player. It should be appreciated that the relationship indicators 108 and 110 may indicate any relationship between a target symbol and a picked symbol. Although there are two relationship indicators in this illustration, a gaming device may have one or more relationship indicators as desired by the game implementor.

One embodiment of the bonus game of the present invention which includes multiple target sets operates according to the flow diagram in Fig. 14. The gaming device initiates a bonus game as indicated by block 112. Initially, a player receives a predetermined number of picks to start a bonus game as indicated by block 113. However, it should be appreciated that the number of picks may be randomly determined or be any number desired by the implementor. By limiting the number of picks, the chances of obtaining multiple target symbols and thereby multiple awards in this embodiment with multiple target sets becomes more difficult. Therefore, a player is challenged to obtain as many target symbols as possible before running out of picks in the bonus game. Such a challenge adds to a player's excitement and enjoyment of the game.

The gaming device then selects and displays a target set including a plurality of symbols as indicated by block

114. In one embodiment, the game displays a plurality of numbers ranging from 0 to 9. While numbers are discussed, it should be appreciated that any symbols are contemplated, including letters A to Z, signs of the Zodiac, months of the year, characters, city names, state names, etc. It is preferred that the symbols are orderly arranged such as in a sequential order in displayed the target set.

The game determines one symbol to be the target symbol in the target set as indicated by block 116. Preferably, the target symbol is randomly determined, however it should be appreciated that a target symbol may be a predetermined symbol in the target set. The target symbol is not displayed to the player until the player picks the target symbol in the target set.

Next, the gaming device prompts the player to select a symbol from the target set as indicated by block 118, which the player believes may be the target symbol in the target set. The prompt may be a statement or message displayed on the display device 30 or 32, or it may be a cursor that flashes and notifies the player to select another symbol. It should be appreciated that the prompt may be any type of prompt initiated by the gaming device 10.

Once the player picks a symbol, the gaming device 10 completes a series of decisions as illustrated by the decision diamonds in the flow diagram of Fig. 14. The processor of the gaming device 10 first determines if the picked symbol is a target symbol as indicated by decision diamond 122. The processor of the gaming device compares the picked symbol to the predetermined target symbol in the target set.

If the picked symbol is the target symbol, the gaming

device highlights the target symbol in some manner to notify the player that the player picked the target symbol in the target set. It should be appreciated that the target symbol may be highlighted by illuminating it, 5 changing the color of the target symbol or by any other desired method. The gaming device then provides the player with an award as indicated by block 126. In the embodiment where there is only one target set in the game, the bonus game ends. In the embodiment where there are 10 several target sets in a bonus game, the processor of the gaming device 10 must determine if the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128b. If there are no picks remaining in the game, the game ends as indicated by oval 130. The player 15 receives the total award for that bonus game.

The player receives an award for each picked target symbol. In one embodiment with multiple target sets, the gaming device provides the player with an award associated with a target symbol. However, it is contemplated that 20 the award value may also be randomly generated by the processor 38. In one embodiment of the present invention, the awards associated with the target symbols are associated with probabilities such that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target set 25 or symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to a player based on the order in which the target symbols are picked. In this embodiment, target symbols are preferably numbers and the player's award is the value 30 of the target number itself. When a player picks a target number, the target number is separately displayed on the display device. Any subsequently picked target numbers are displayed in sequential order next to the previously

picked target number or numbers. The player receives the total award designated by the combination of the individual awards from each target symbol. For example, a target set includes the numbers one through nine. A
5 player picks a target number one from a first target set. Then the player picks target number zero from a second target set and target number nine from a third target set. The player's total award for that bonus game is one hundred nine based on the sequential order of the picked
10 target symbols. It should be appreciated that a player may receive the sum of the individual awards or some other suitable award as desired by the game implementor.

If the player has picks remaining in the bonus game, the gaming device 10 displays a new target set with a
15 plurality of symbols to the player as indicated by block 114. The gaming device determines the target symbol and prompts the player to pick a symbol from the target set as indicated by blocks 116 and 118 respectively. The gaming device then repeats the steps described above starting at
20 block 120.

If the player picks a symbol that is not the target symbol, the gaming device 10 must determine whether the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128a. If the player has
25 picks remaining, the gaming device determines the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol. Once the relationship is determined, the gaming device displays the relationship to the player as indicated by block 124. The gaming device prompts the
30 player to pick another symbol as indicated by block 118. The process described above is repeated until the player picks a target symbol in the target set or the player runs out of picks. If, however, the player does not have any

picks remaining in block 128A, the game ends as indicated by block 130 and the bonus game award total is transferred to the player.

5 Figs. 15A to 15K illustrate an example of one embodiment of the present invention. In this example, the target set symbols are numbers and the player starts out the game with seven picks. Also, the player does not start out with any symbols being revealed or with any type of award as shown by display 106.

10 Referring to Fig. 15A, a display device 30 or 32 including a first target set 100 with a plurality of target symbols or numbers 102a through 102j is illustrated. This embodiment includes a plurality of target sets. The gaming device randomly determines one of
15 the numbers zero through nine to be the target symbol or target number in the first target set. The gaming device selects nine as the target number. The target number is not identified to the player until the player picks the target number in the target set. The gaming device then
20 prompts the player to pick a number from the target set in a suitable manner (not shown) such as using a touch screen or other symbol or number selector connected to the processor. In this game, the player's first pick is the number five designated as 102f from the target set 100.

25 Referring now to Fig. 15B, the number five is highlighted as being the player's first pick. The processor of the gaming device 10 now determines whether the player's first pick is the target number which is nine, or whether the target number is higher or lower than
30 the picked number. In this example, the gaming device compares the first pick 102f to the target number nine. The gaming device 10 determines that the target number is higher than the picked number, five, and therefore

highlights the relationship indicator 108. Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target symbol is higher than the first picked number. The player must pick a symbol that is higher than their first
5 pick so that they have a chance to obtain the target symbol. Also, the pick remaining display 104 now shows that there are six picks remaining in the bonus game.

The player makes their second pick from the group of numbers 102 in target set 100 as illustrated in Fig. 15C.
10 The player picks the number eight, designated as 102i, which is highlighted. The processor of the gaming device determines that the target number nine is still higher than the second pick and therefore highlights the relationship indicator 108 as illuminated in Fig. 15D.
15 Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target number is higher than the picked number. Because there is only one number higher than the player's last pick, the player will likely obtain the target symbol on their next pick. It should be
20 appreciated that although the next pick appears obvious, the player preferably must make the correct pick of the target number. If by chance, the player picks a different number, the game will continue as described above. In one embodiment of the bonus game, the player will
25 automatically obtain the target number when there is only one possible pick remaining in the target set. In another embodiment, the processor deactivates numbers that were selected by the player and were not the target numbers. In this embodiment, the player eventually obtains the
30 target number when all of the other numbers in the target set, except the target number, are deactivated by the processor. Referring to Fig. 15D, the player has five picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by the pick

remaining display 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15E, the player picks the first target number. The player picked the number nine which is the target number in the target set 100. Thus, an award, 5 which in this embodiment is a predetermined award value of twenty-five, is displayed in the award display 106. The player still has four picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated in the pick remaining display 104 and therefore continues to play the bonus game. It should thus be 10 appreciated that in this embodiment, the number of picks the player uses for each target set will determine the number of picks available to the player for subsequent target sets.

15 In Fig. 15F, the player is now trying to match a second target number in a new target set 100a. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number four (102d) from the second target set. As illustrated, the picked numbers that were highlighted previously, are not 20 highlighted anymore because the player is attempting to obtain a new target number in a new target set 100.

Here, the player picks the number six designated as 102g, from the group of numbers 102 in the second target set 100 as illustrated in Fig 15F. The processor of the 25 gaming device 10 determines whether this pick is the target number or if the target number is higher or lower than the picked number. In this case, as shown in Fig. 15G, the target number four is lower than the picked number. Thus, the target number indicator 110 is 30 illuminated, which notifies the player that the target number is lower than the picked number. On the next pick, the player must pick a lower number than their first pick in this target set to obtain the target number. After

this pick, the player has only three picks remaining as indicated by the pick remaining display 104.

In Fig. 15H, the player makes their second pick in the target set and the sixth pick overall in the bonus game. The player picks the number three designated as 102d. This pick is lower than their previous pick of six that is highlighted. However, as Fig. 15I illustrates, this pick is still not the target number. The processor of the gaming device 10 determines that the target number four is higher than the player's second pick, three, and notifies the player by illuminating the target symbol indicator 108. The player now must pick either the four (102e) or five (102f) with their next pick. The player has only two picks remaining as shown in the pick display 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15J, the player picks the target number from the second target set 100a. The player picked the number four (102e), which is the target number. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five to the player. The award of twenty-five is added to the player's previous award of twenty-five to give a total award for the bonus game of fifty. The pick remaining display 104 now shows that the player has only one pick remaining in this game to obtain another target number.

In Fig. 15K, the player makes a first pick in the third target set 100b. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number five (102f). Although this is the player's first pick in the new target set, it is the player's seventh and final pick in the bonus game. The player picks the number five (102f) from the third target set. Fortunately for the player, the player picked the target number in the third target set on their first pick. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five

to the player for picking the target number. The player now has a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game. Since this is the final pick, the player receives a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game as indicated by the award display 106. If the player did not pick the target number with the player's final pick, the player may not obtain an award for the third target set 100b. It should be appreciated that the award associated with each subsequent target set or target number increases in one embodiment.

Referring now to Fig. 16, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the award or combined award equals a combination of target symbols. The symbols in this embodiment are preferably numbers. However, it should be appreciated that the symbols can be any suitable symbols desired by the game implementor. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides an award for the combination of each picked target number. The award or combined award is the order of the target numbers. Once the target number is picked, the target number is transferred to the award combination 112. The award combination preferably includes three award locations 114 including a first award location 114a, a second award location 114b and a third award location 114c. It should be appreciated that an award combination can include any suitable number of award locations as desired.

In this illustration, the player picked the first target number, which was the number one (102b). The number one, therefore, is transferred to the first award location 114a. The player then picked the target number five (102f) from the second target set. This target number is placed in the second award location 114b in the award combination 112. If the player ran out of picks at

this point in the bonus game, the player would receive the award indicated by the award combination. The award would be the value represented by the first and second target numbers in award locations 114a and 114b, which is
5 fifteen. This is a relatively low bonus award because the first number is a low number. Because of such possibility, the game implementor may want to weight higher numbers in the target set to be randomly selected for the first target set to increase the award to the
10 player in such cases. Alternatively, if the award is below a pre-determined threshold, the processor may cause a replay of the game to provide a sufficient award to the player. Alternatively, the number may be used as a non-credit value such as a multiplier, number of free spins or
15 number of free games.

In the third target set, the player picked the third target number, which was two. The target number two is transferred to the third and final award location 114c in the award combination 112. In this embodiment, the bonus
20 game ends when the player completes the award combination or runs out of picks. Here, the player completed the award combination 112. The player receives the total award indicated by the award combination 112, which is one hundred fifty-two. This award is displayed in the award
25 display 108.

In one aspect of this embodiment, the player may receive an additional award (not shown) for completing the award combination 112. The additional award may be a predetermined award, a random award or any type of award
30 desired. In another aspect of this embodiment, each subsequent target set is larger in size, or includes more symbols or numbers. By increasing the target set size, the level of difficulty of obtaining the target numbers in

each subsequent target set increases. For example, in a game with three target sets, the first target set includes five numbers, the second target set includes seven numbers and the third target set includes ten numbers. It should
5 also be appreciated that the target set size could decrease or could be randomly determined.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device provides additional awards to a player for having picks remaining at the end of a bonus game.
10 Preferably, the gaming device provides an award for each remaining pick. In another aspect of this embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game for having
15 picks remaining in the game. The player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards. In a further aspect of this embodiment, the gaming device displays several masked or hidden selections to the player (not shown). The player
20 picks a selection with each remaining pick from the bonus game. Each selection provides an additional award to the player. The additional award may be any type of award desired by the game implementor.

Referring now to Fig. 17, the display device 30 or 32
25 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the target set 200 includes symbols 202 designated as 202a to 202f. The symbols 202 are letters in the alphabet and are arranged in a vertical configuration. The gaming device provides a predetermined
30 award associated with each target letter. The award can also be based on the total number of target letters obtained by a player in the bonus game. The relationship indicators are represented by an up arrow 206 and a down

arrow 208. Relationship indicator 206 is highlighted or illuminated if a target letter is higher than or above a picked symbol. If the target letter is lower than or below a picked symbol then the down arrow 208 is highlighted. If a player obtains a target letter in the target set 100, the target letter is transferred to the award combination 204. The award combination includes one or more award locations. In this illustration, the award combination has four award locations 204a to 204d. The first award location 204a represents the first target letter obtained by the player, the second award location 204b represents the second target letter obtained by the player, and so forth. In this illustration, the player obtained all four of the target letters in the award combination 204. Each target letter represents an award determined by the game implementor. This embodiment also has an award display 210 that indicates the accumulated award provided to the player during the bonus game. It also includes a pick remaining display 212 that indicates the number of picks remaining in the bonus game.

Referring now to Fig. 18, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device provides the player with a number of picks at the beginning of the bonus game. The number of picks such as four is displayed to the player by the picks remaining display 304. The gaming device also displays a masked target combination 312 having one or more masked target numbers 313. The player picks a number 302a to 302j from the target set 300 until the player picks a target number. The target number indicators 308 and 310 indicate whether the selected number is higher or lower than the target number.

In Fig. 18, the target combination includes three masked target numbers "2," "1" and "8" (shown in phantom). The processor forms the target combination 312 by randomly selecting and placing the target numbers 313 in the target combination from a plurality of target numbers (not shown) based on the order that the target numbers are selected. It should be appreciated that the target combination may include target symbols or other characters as desired by the game implementor. It should also be appreciated that the order that the target numbers are placed in the target combination can be any suitable order. Additionally, the target combination may be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number in a target set is a digit in the target combination.

15 If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award (not shown) to the player. The award is preferably based on the number of picks that the player has remaining in the bonus game. In one embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain additional awards.

25 In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target numbers or symbols in the target combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the target combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target combination. It should also be appreciated that the player may also obtain an additional award or larger award for obtaining the target number or

symbol in a target set based on the number of picks used by the player.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In 5 this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game increases because the player does not know when their picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

While the present invention has been described in 10 connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements 15 included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by 20 the scope of the claims.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming device comprising:
 - a plurality of first selections including at least one
 - 5 trigger selection;
 - a plurality of second selections;
 - at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
 - a number of picks associated with said first and second
 - 10 selections;
 - a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
 - a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
 - 15 until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for
 - 20 each pick by the player from the second selections, and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.
- 25 2. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.
3. The gaming device of Claim 1 or 2, wherein the plurality of awards includes at least one relatively large
- 30 award and a plurality of relatively small awards.
4. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which

includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the first selections.

5. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the first selections.

6. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

7. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

8. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein at least one award is associated with each of the second selections.

9. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional award associated with the first selections.

10. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the number of picks is predetermined.

11. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the number of picks is randomly determined.

12. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger

selection.

13. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when
5 the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

14. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

10 15. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 13, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

16. The gaming device of Claim 15, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member
15 which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

17. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

20

18. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

25 19. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

20. A gaming device comprising:
30 a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;

at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second selections, wherein the number of picks is greater than
5 the number of first selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection,
10 reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection; reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections, and provides any
15 awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

21. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

20

22. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

23. The gaming device of Claim 22, wherein the mechanical
25 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

24. The gaming device of Claim 22 or 23, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or
30 more trigger symbols.

25. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 24, wherein

the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

26. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 25, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

27. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with the first and second selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks one of the trigger selections or until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks any of the trigger selections and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

28. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

29. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

30. The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

31. The gaming device of Claim 29 or 30, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

32. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 31, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

33. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 32, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

34. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 33, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.

35. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 34, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks one of the trigger selections with the last pick.

36. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 35, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

37. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of
trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections associated with each of
5 the trigger selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first
selections until the player picks one of the trigger
selections or until there are no picks remaining, reduces
15 the number of picks for each pick by the player from the
first selections, enables the player to pick second
selections associated with said trigger selection picked
by the player if there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
20 second selections and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
until there are no picks remaining.

38. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
25 device is a touch screen.

39. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
device is a mechanical display.

30 40. The gaming device of Claim 39, wherein the mechanical
display includes at least one movable revealing member
which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

41. The gaming device of Claim 39 or 40, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.
- 5 42. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 41, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.
43. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 42, wherein
10 the awards associated with each of the plurality of second selections are different.
44. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 43, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the
15 display device.
45. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 44, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking one of the
20 trigger selections.
46. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 45, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.
25
47. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 46, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.
- 30 48. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;

a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
5 selections;
at least one additional pick associated with one of the first or second selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
10 a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection or until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, provides at least one additional pick when the
15 player picks one of the first selections having at least one additional pick associated with said first selection, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the second selections, provides at least one additional pick when the player picks one of the second selections having at least one additional pick associated with said second selection, and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections
25 picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

49. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

30 50. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

51. The gaming device of Claim 50, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

5 52. The gaming device of Claim 50 or 51, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

53. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 52, wherein
10 the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

54. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 53, wherein at least one of the additional picks is associated with a
15 bonus symbol.

55. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 54, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

20

56. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 55, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.

25

57. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 56, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

30 58. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 57, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

59. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one
trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;
5 at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
at least one relationship indicator which identifies the
10 relationship between the trigger selection and each
selection picked by a player;
a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables the player to pick the first
15 selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
until there are no picks remaining, activates the
relationship indicator to identify the relationship
between the trigger selection and the selection picked by
the player reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the first selections, enables the player
to pick second selections when the player picks the target
selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
second selections and provides any awards associated with
25 the second selections picked by the player until there are
no picks remaining.

60. The gaming device of Claim 59, wherein the number of
picks is greater than the number of first selections.

30

61. The gaming device of Claim 59 or 60, which includes a
selector for enabling the player to activate the

relationship indicator.

62. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 61, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

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63. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 62, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

64. The gaming device of Claim 63, wherein the mechanical
10 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

65. The gaming device of Claim 64, wherein the first
15 selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

66. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 65, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the
20 display device.

67. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 66, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger
25 selection.

68. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 67, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

69. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 68, which
30 includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

70. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of sets including first selections;
at least one trigger selection included in each of said
sets;
5 a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the sets of
first selections and the second selections;
a number of picks associated with each of the sets and the
second selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick first
selections in each of the sets until the player picks the
trigger selection in the sets or until there are no picks
15 remaining to pick first selections in the sets, reduces
the number of picks associated with each set for each
first selection picked by the player in those sets,
enables the player to pick the second selections when the
player picks at least one trigger selection, provides a
20 total number of picks to the player based on the sum of
the picks remaining for each set, reduces the total number
of picks for each pick by the player from the second
selections, and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
25 until there are no picks remaining.

71. The gaming device of Claim 70, wherein the number of
picks associated with each set is greater than the number
of first selections in said sets.

30

72. The gaming device of Claim 70 or 71, which includes
at least one additional pick associated with one of the

first selections in each of the sets.

73. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 72, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of
5 the first selections in each of the sets.

74. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 73, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

10

75. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 74, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

15 76. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 75, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player does not pick any of the trigger selections in the sets before running out of picks for said sets.

20 77. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 76, which includes at least one additional pick associated with each of the trigger selections in the sets.

78. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 77, which
25 includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

79. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

30

80. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

81. The gaming device of Claim 80, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals the first selections in each of the sets.

5

82. The gaming device of Claim 80 or 81, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

10 83. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 82, wherein the second selections replace the sets of first selections on the display device.

84. A method of operating a gaming device, the method
15 comprising the steps of:

- (a) displaying a plurality of first selections including a trigger selection to a player;
- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
- 20 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) displaying a plurality of second selections to the player when the player picks the trigger selection wherein
- 25 the second selections are associated with awards;
- (f) repeating steps (g) to (i) until there are no picks remaining;
- (g) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (h) reducing the number of picks for each second
- 30 selection picked by the player; and
- (i) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player.

85. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second selections are displayed on a touch screen.

86. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second
5 selections are displayed on a mechanical display.

87. The method of any of Claims 84 to 86, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

10

88. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the number of picks is reduced by a predetermined amount.

89. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the
15 number of picks is reduced by a random amount.

90. The method of any of Claims 84 to 89, wherein the awards include a plurality of relatively small awards and at least one relatively large award.

20

91. The method of any of Claims 84 to 90, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player picks the trigger selection with the final pick.

25

92. The method of any of Claims 84 to 91, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player does not pick the trigger selection before running out of picks.

30

93. The method of any of Claims 84 to 92, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the

player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

94. The method of any of Claims 84 to 93, which includes
5 the step of providing at least one multiplier to the player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

95. The method of any of Claims 84 to 94, wherein the
10 first selections include a plurality of trigger selections.

96. The gaming device of any of Claims 84 to 95, wherein
the second selections replace the first selections.

15

97. The method of any of Claims 84 to 96, wherein the steps (a) to (i) are provided to the player through a data network.

20 98. The method of Claim 97, wherein the data network is an internet.

99. The method of any of Claims 84 to 98, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the
25 player for the second selections.

100. A method of operating a gaming device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a plurality of first selections including
30 at least one trigger selection and a plurality of second selections to a player, wherein a plurality of awards are associated with the second selections;

- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
- 5 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (f) reducing the number of picks for each second
- 10 selection picked by the player;
- (g) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player; and
- (h) repeating steps (e) to (g) until there are no picks remaining.

Application No: GB 0302849.5
Claims searched: 1-19, 27-69 and 84-99

Examiner: Stuart Purdy
Date of search: 24 June 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
XE	1, 27, 48, and 84 at least	EP 1298607 A2 (IGT) see figure 7, column 11 line 19, column 11 line 20-22, and column 11 line 49-column 12 line 12;
XP	1, 27, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 6439995 B1 (HUGHES-BAIRD) see column 2 lines 54-56, and column 7 lines 1-8
XP	1, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 2003/0027616 A1 (VANCURA) see page 3 paragraph 29.

Categories:

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
& Member of the same patent family	E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^v:

G4V

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁷:

G07F

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

WPI, JAPIO, AND EPODOC

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(51) INT CL⁷

G07F 17/32

(52) UK CL (Edition V)

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(56) Documents Cited

EP 1298607 A2

US 6439995 B1

US 20030027616 A1

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition V) G4V VAA VBK

INT CL⁷ G07F 17/32 17/34

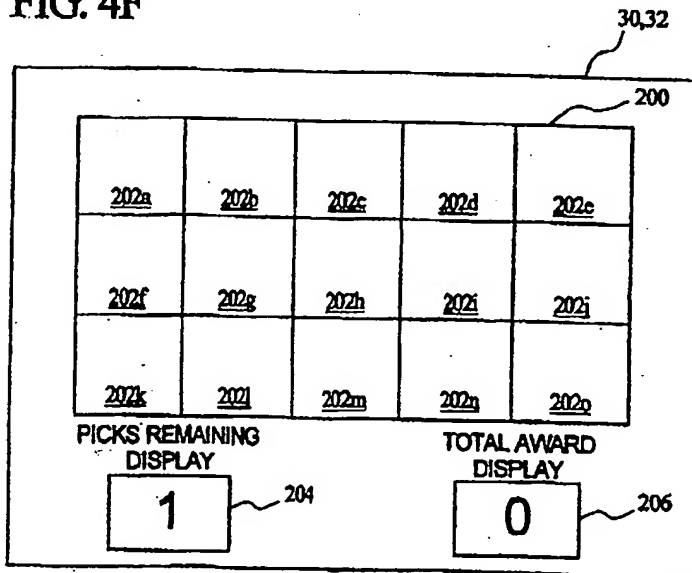
Other: Online: WPI, JAPIO AND EPODOC

(54) Abstract Title

Pick reduction gambling machine

(57) A reel type gambling machine comprises an additional bonus game. The bonus game is presented on a supplementary display 30 which shows a number of selection elements 202a-202o, picks remaining 204 and total awards 206. The selection elements may be in the form of single rows, a matrix or a random distribution. Upon graduation to the bonus game a player picks from the first selection elements and the number of picks are reduced until the player picks a trigger selection. When triggered the display shows a number of second selections, each of which is associated with an award, and the player picks the second selections until there are no picks remaining. The selections may be made via a touch screen 200 or mechanical doors (not shown).

FIG. 4F



GB 2 385 701

FIG. 1A

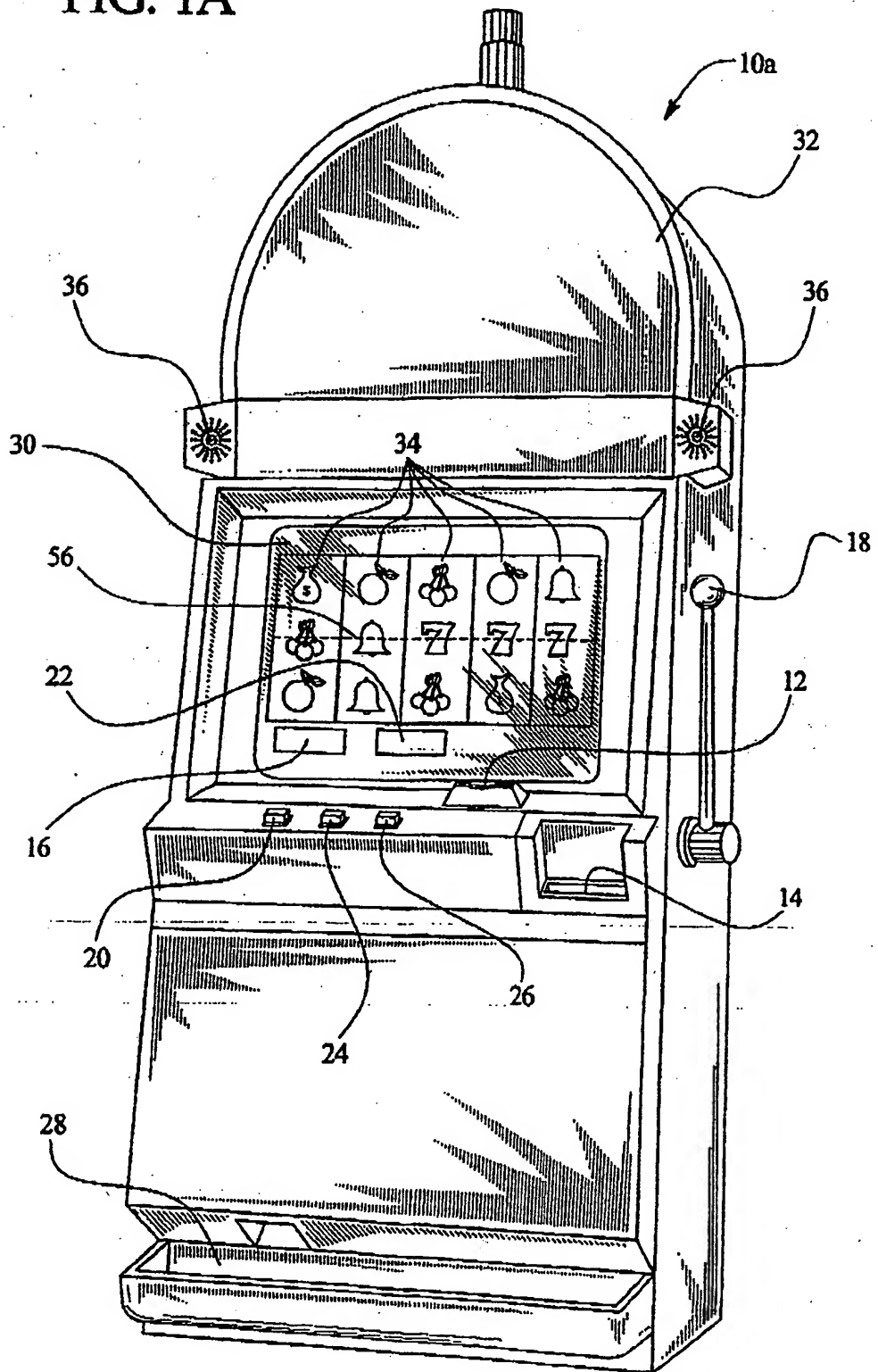


FIG. 1B

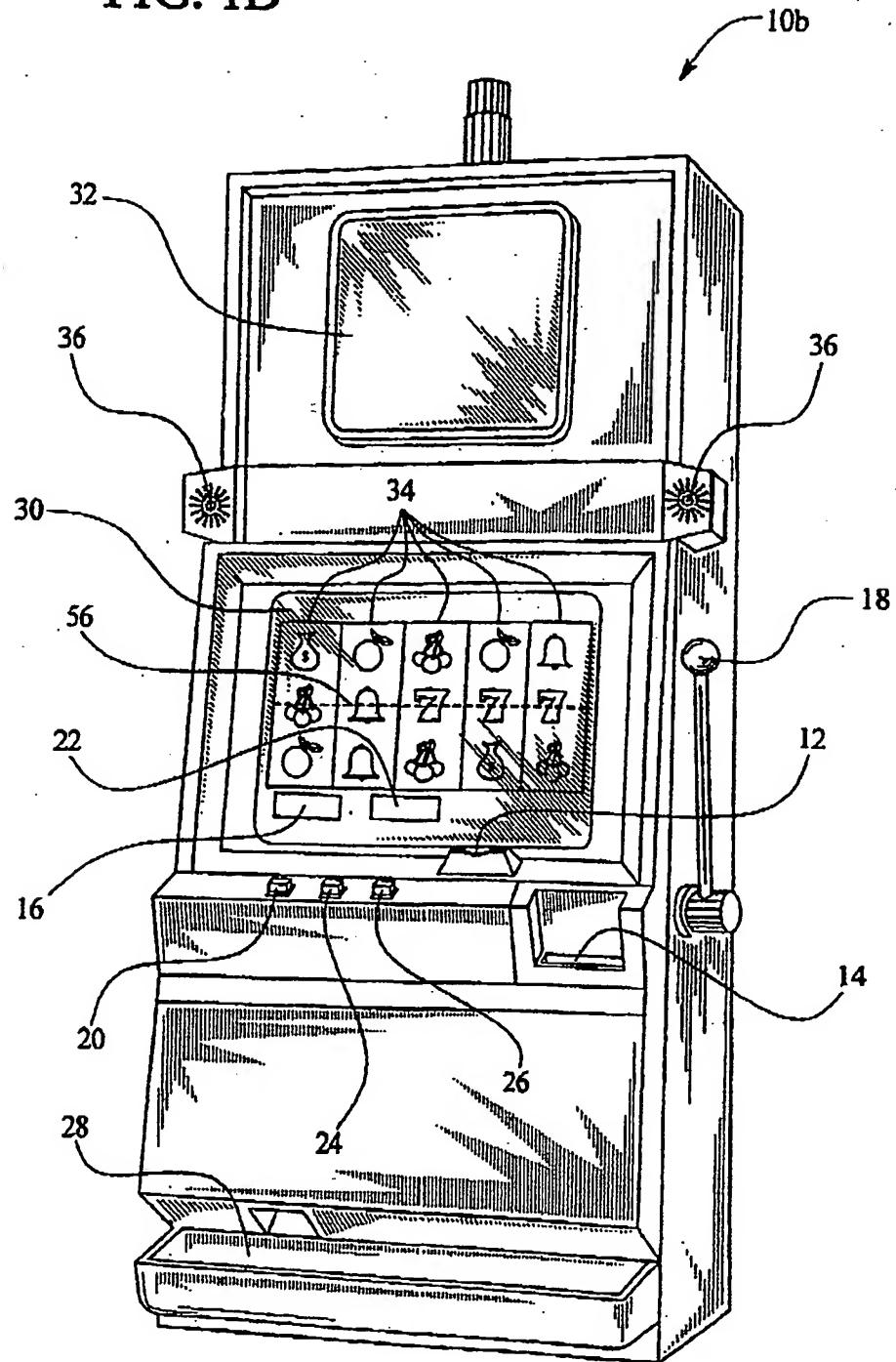


FIG. 2

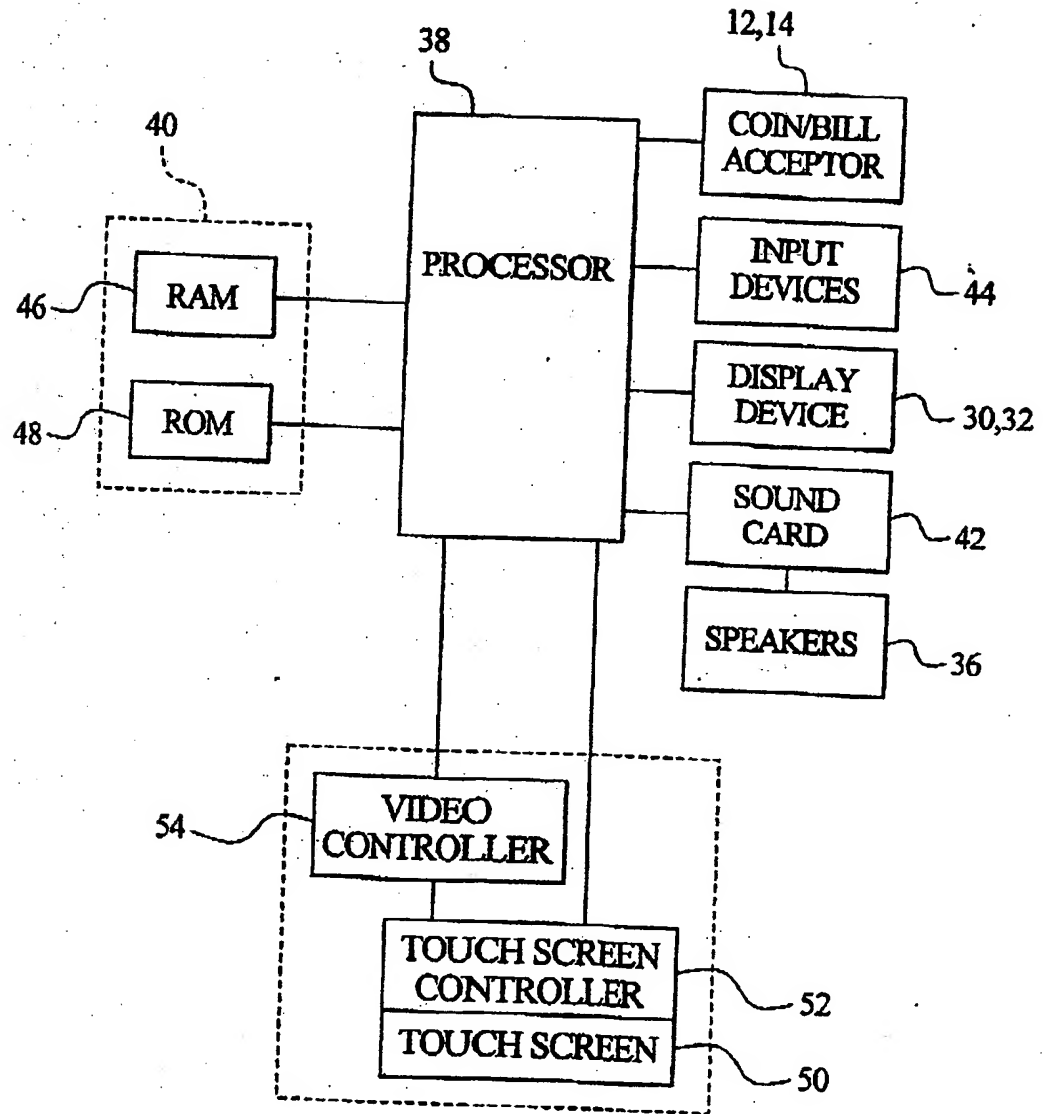


FIG. 3A

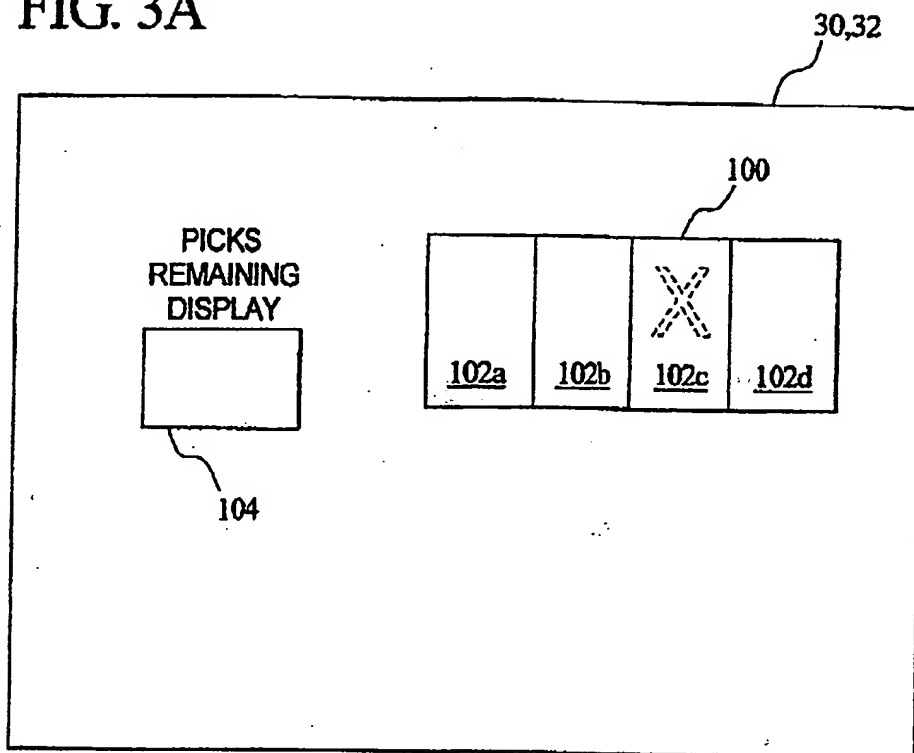


FIG. 3B

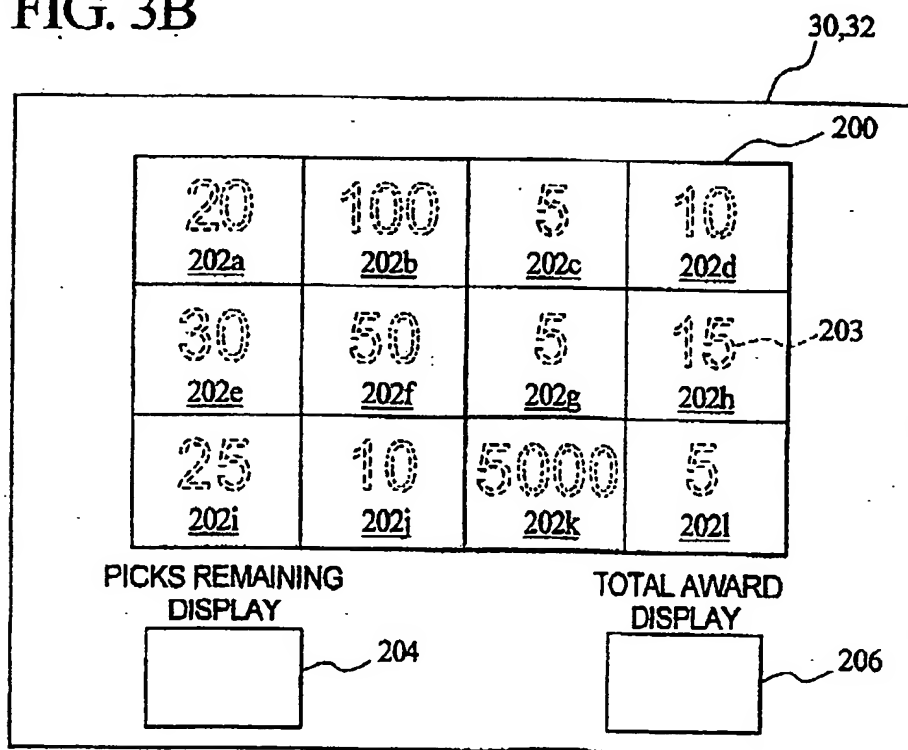


FIG. 4A

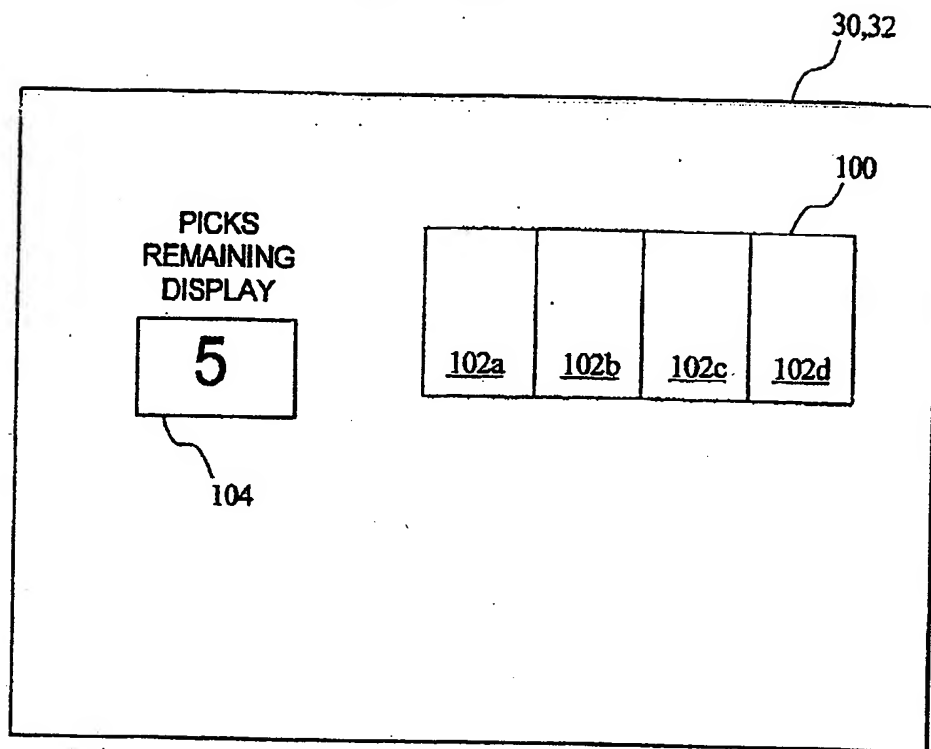


FIG. 4B

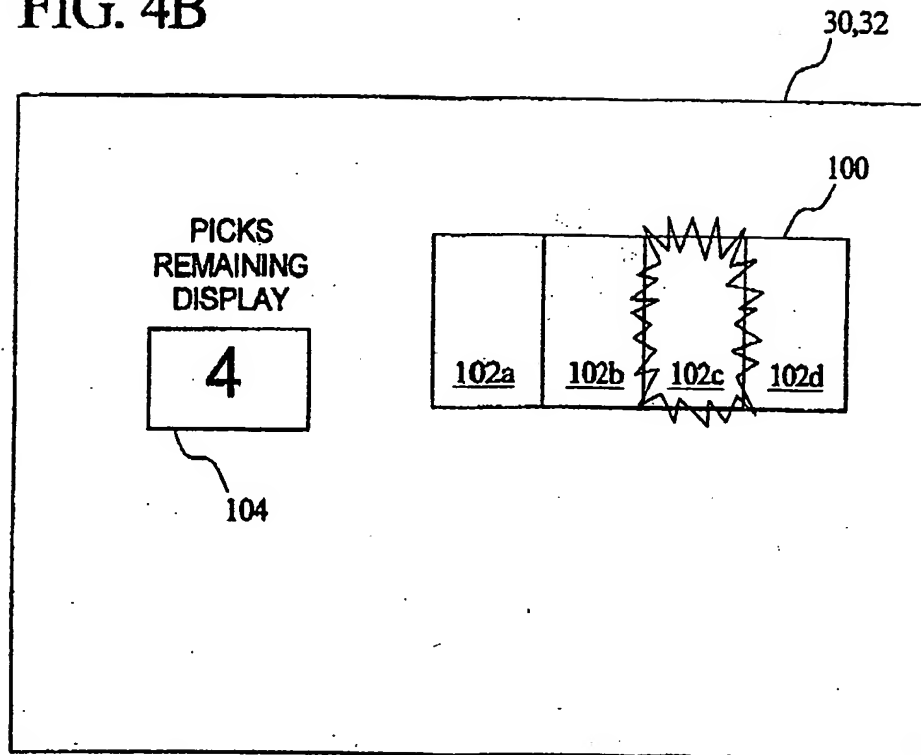


FIG. 4C

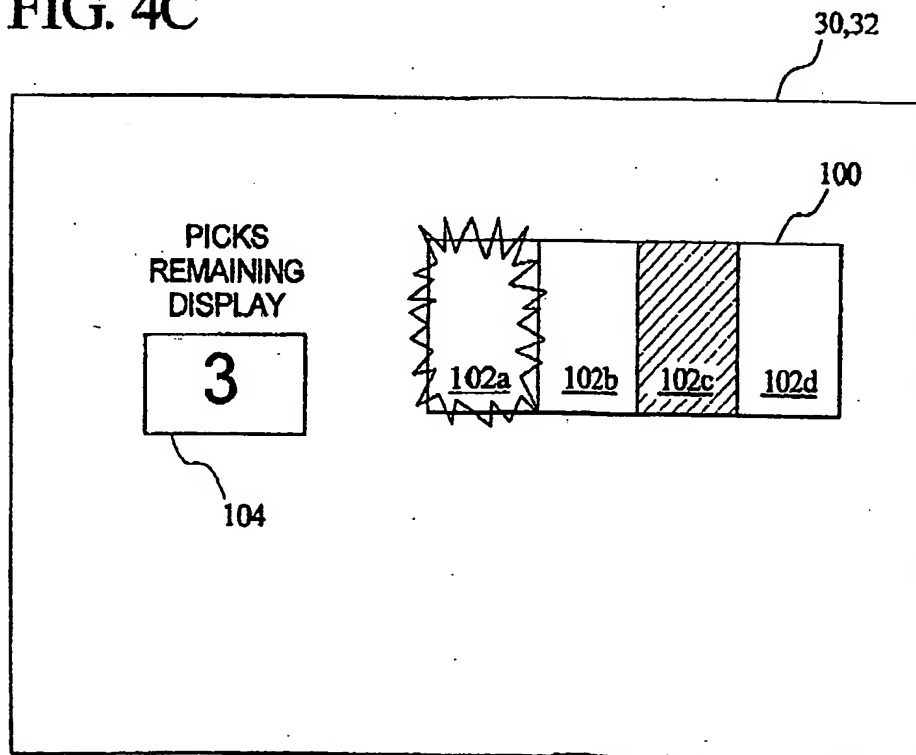


FIG. 4D

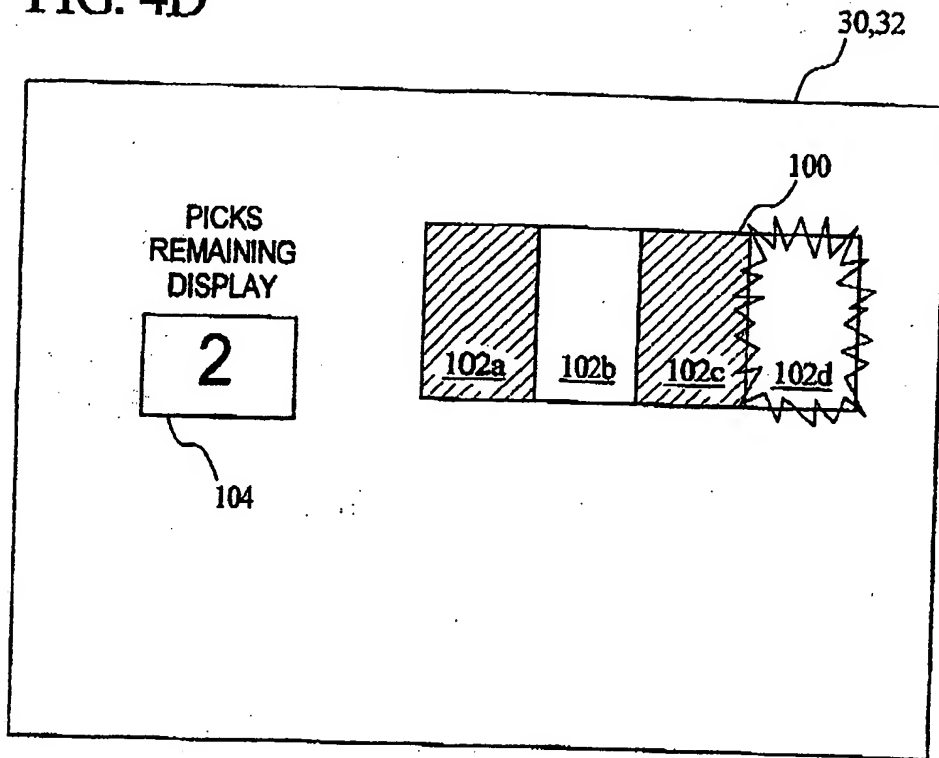


FIG. 4E

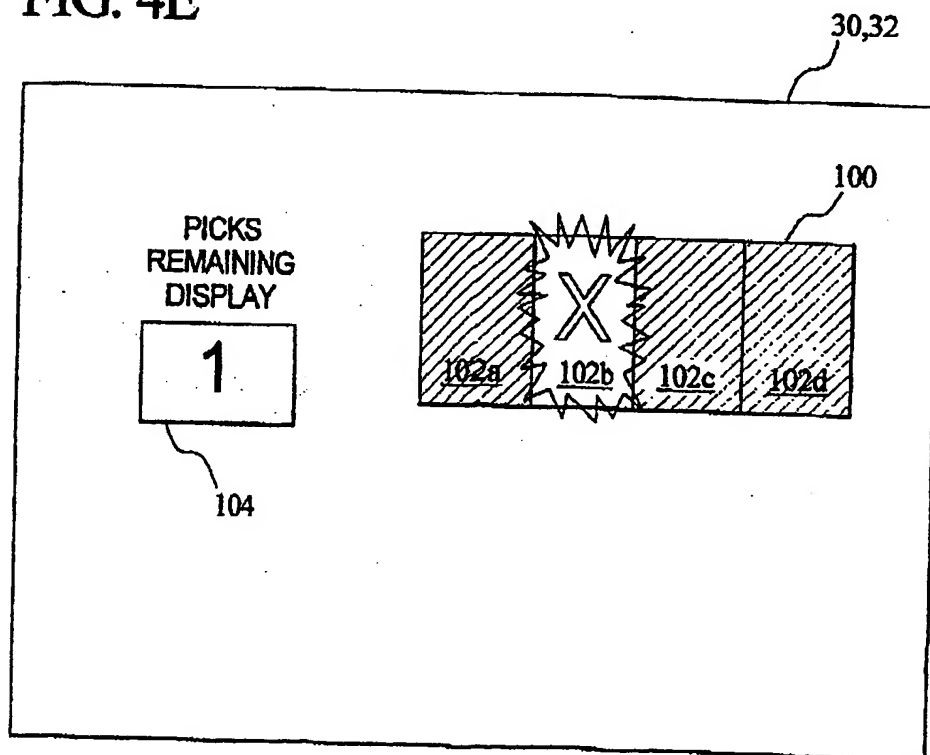


FIG. 4F

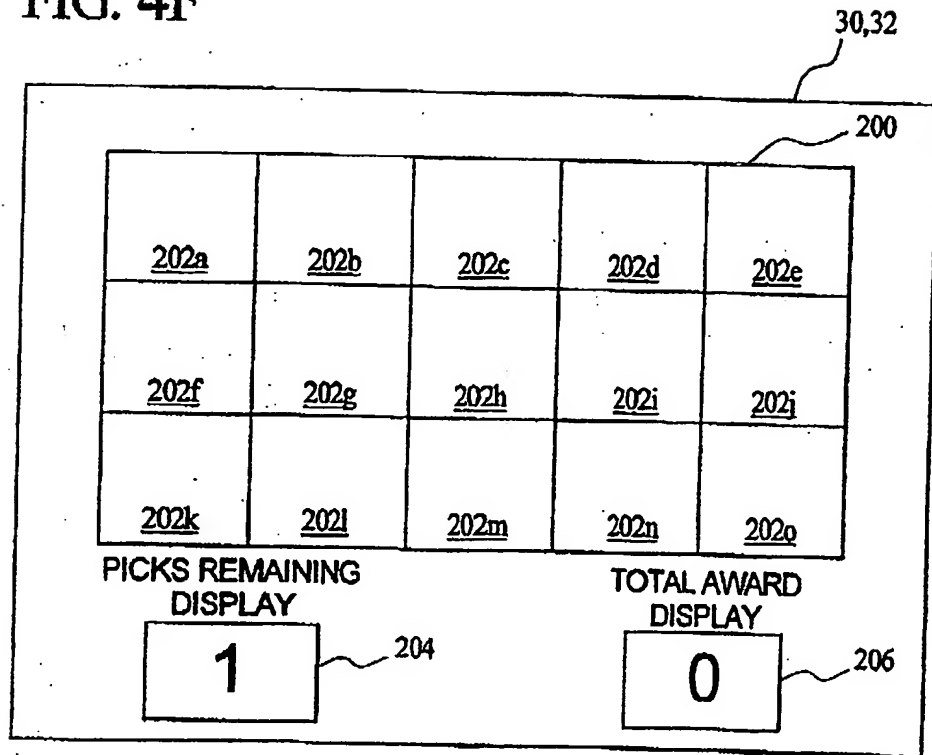


FIG. 4G

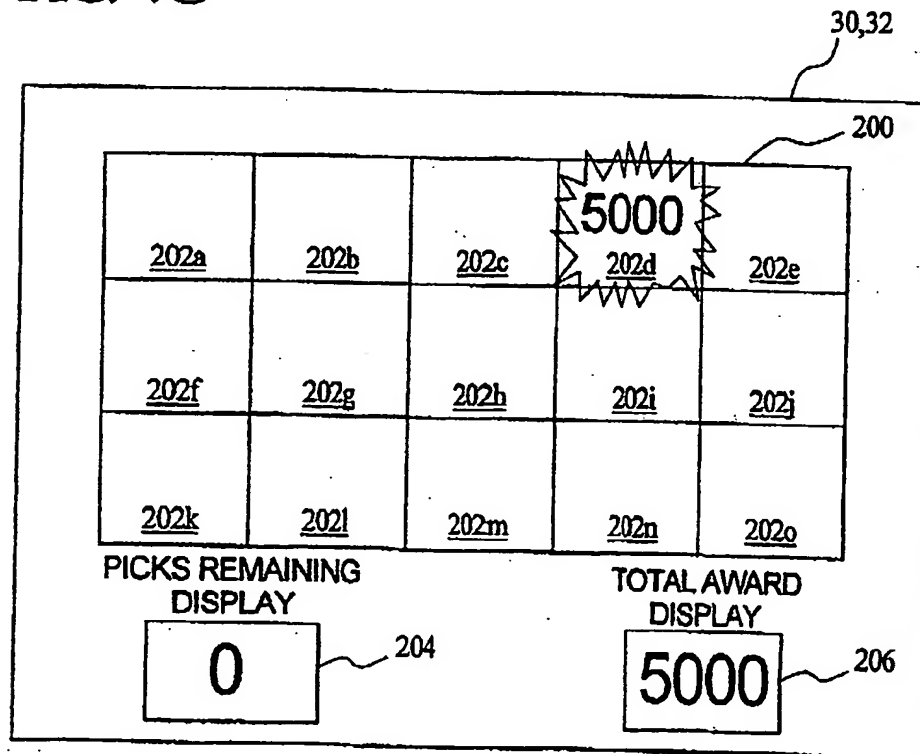


FIG. 5A

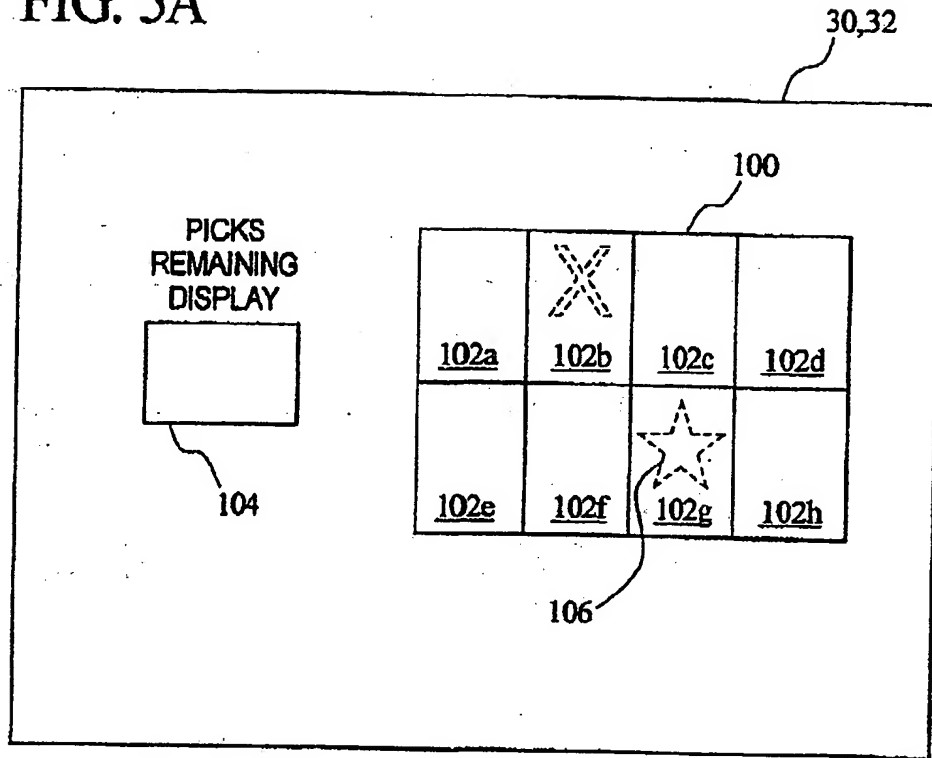
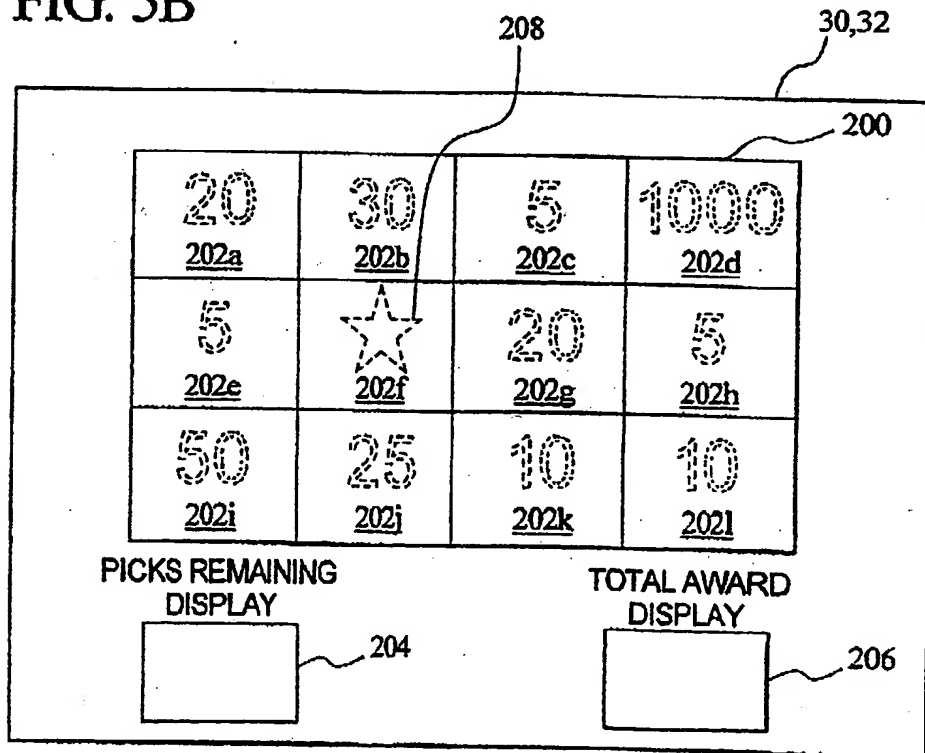


FIG. 5B



10/26

FIG. 6

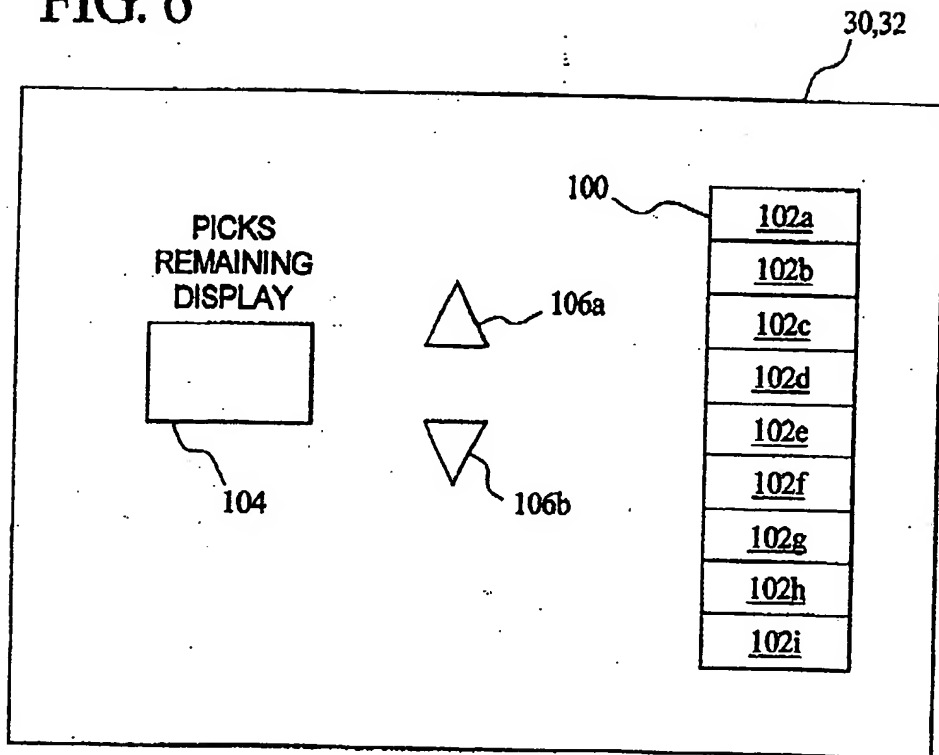
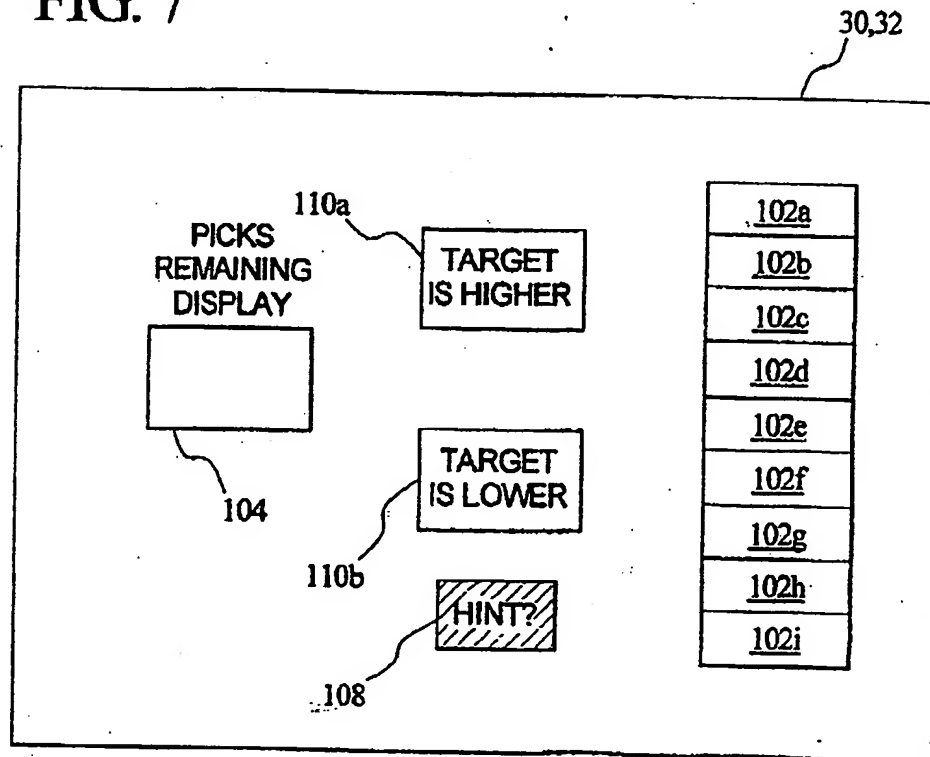


FIG. 7



11/26

FIG. 8A

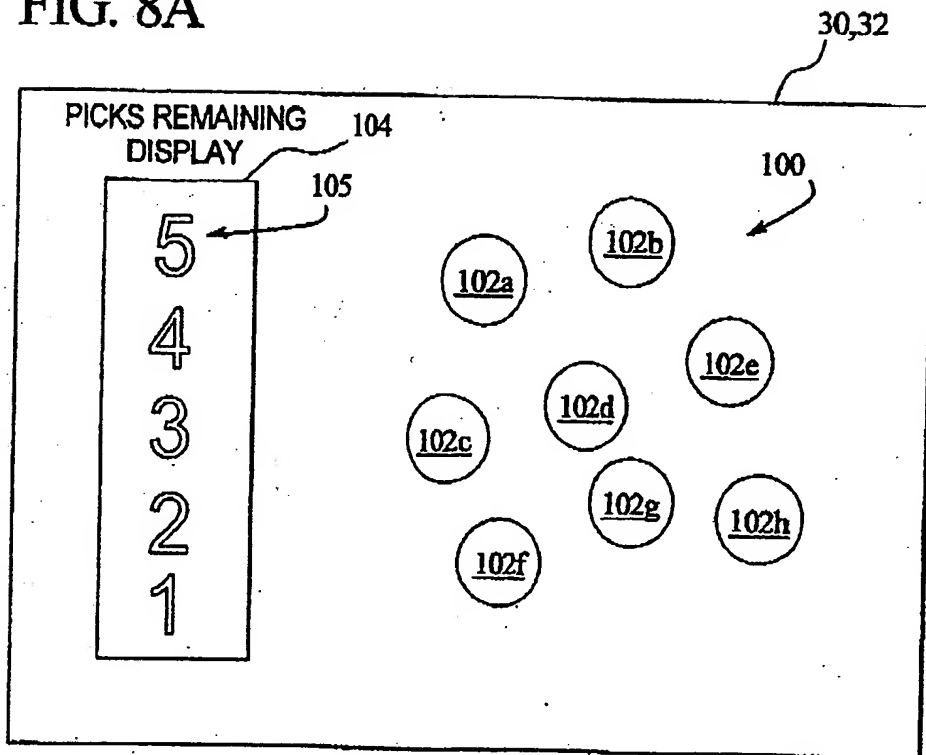
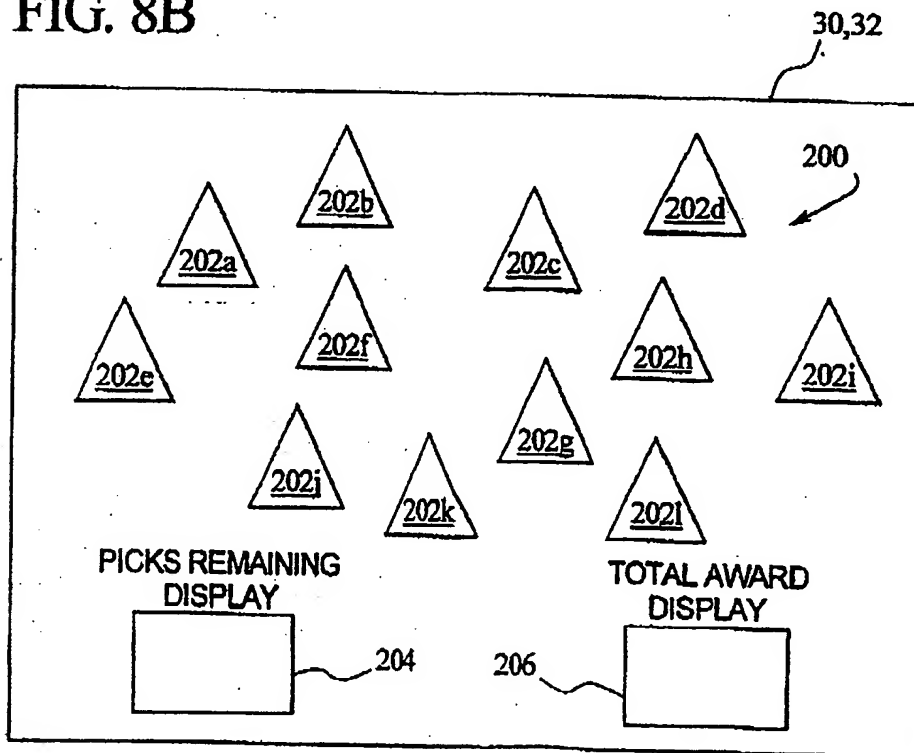


FIG. 8B



12/26

FIG. 9A

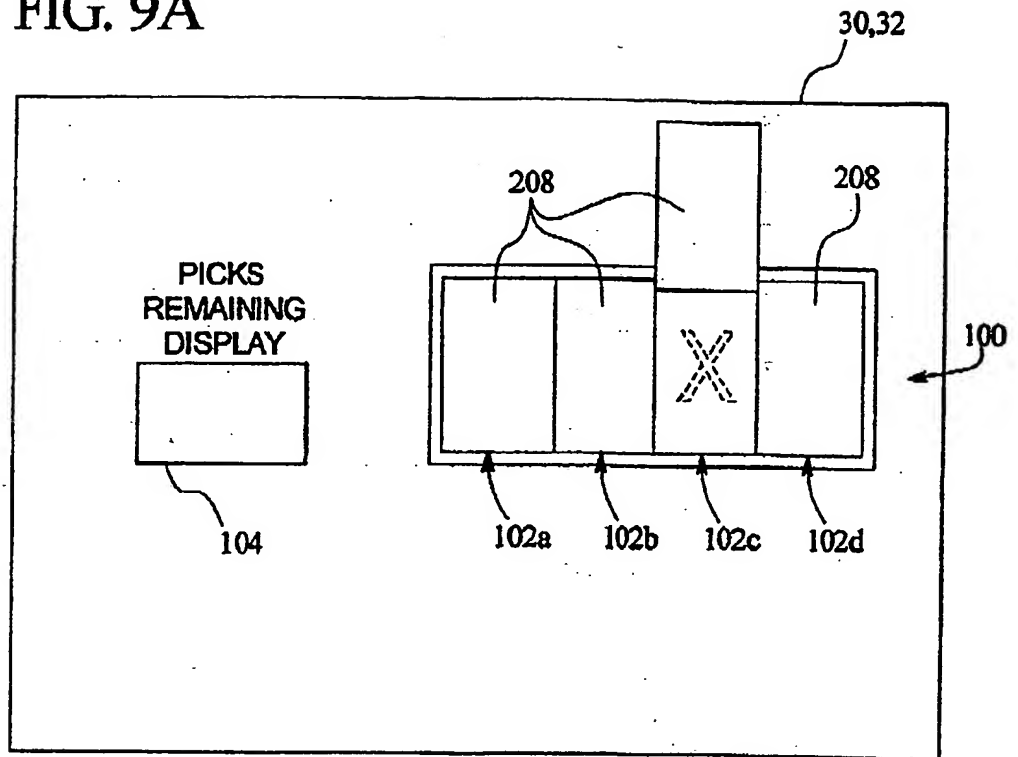


FIG. 9B

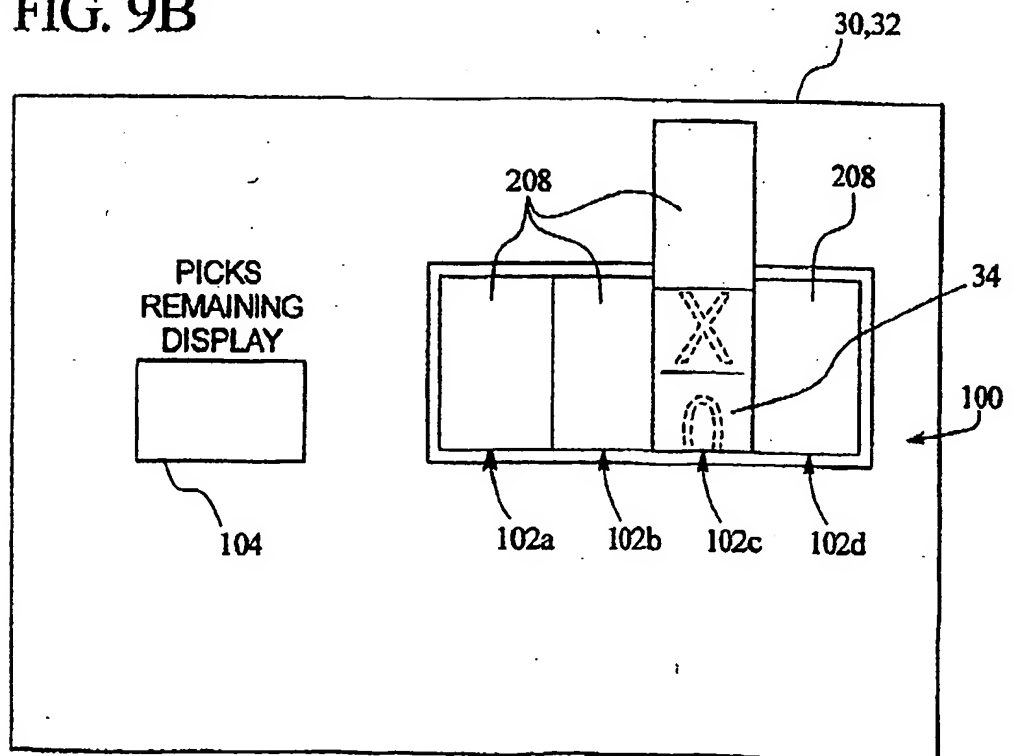


FIG. 10

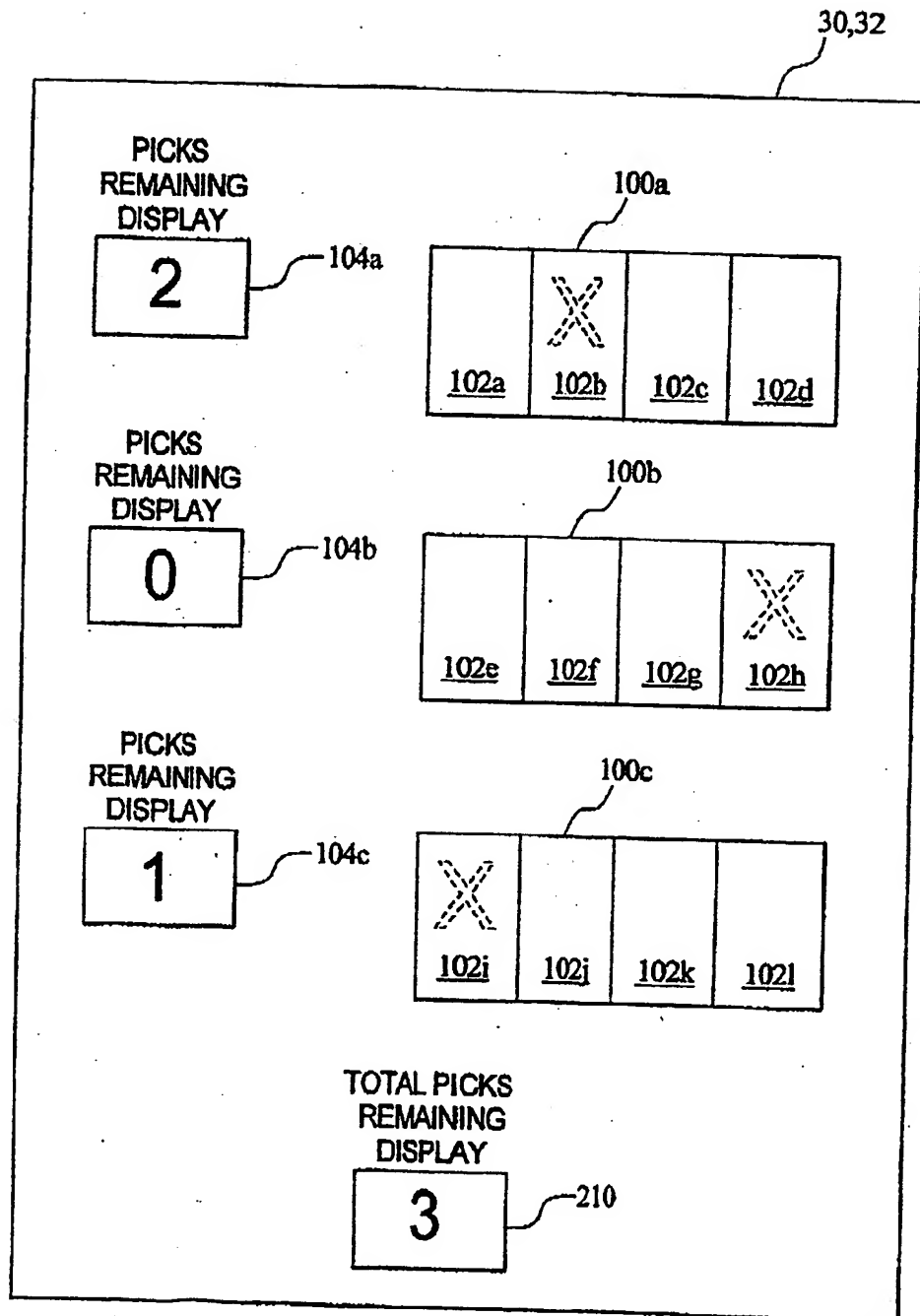


FIG 11A

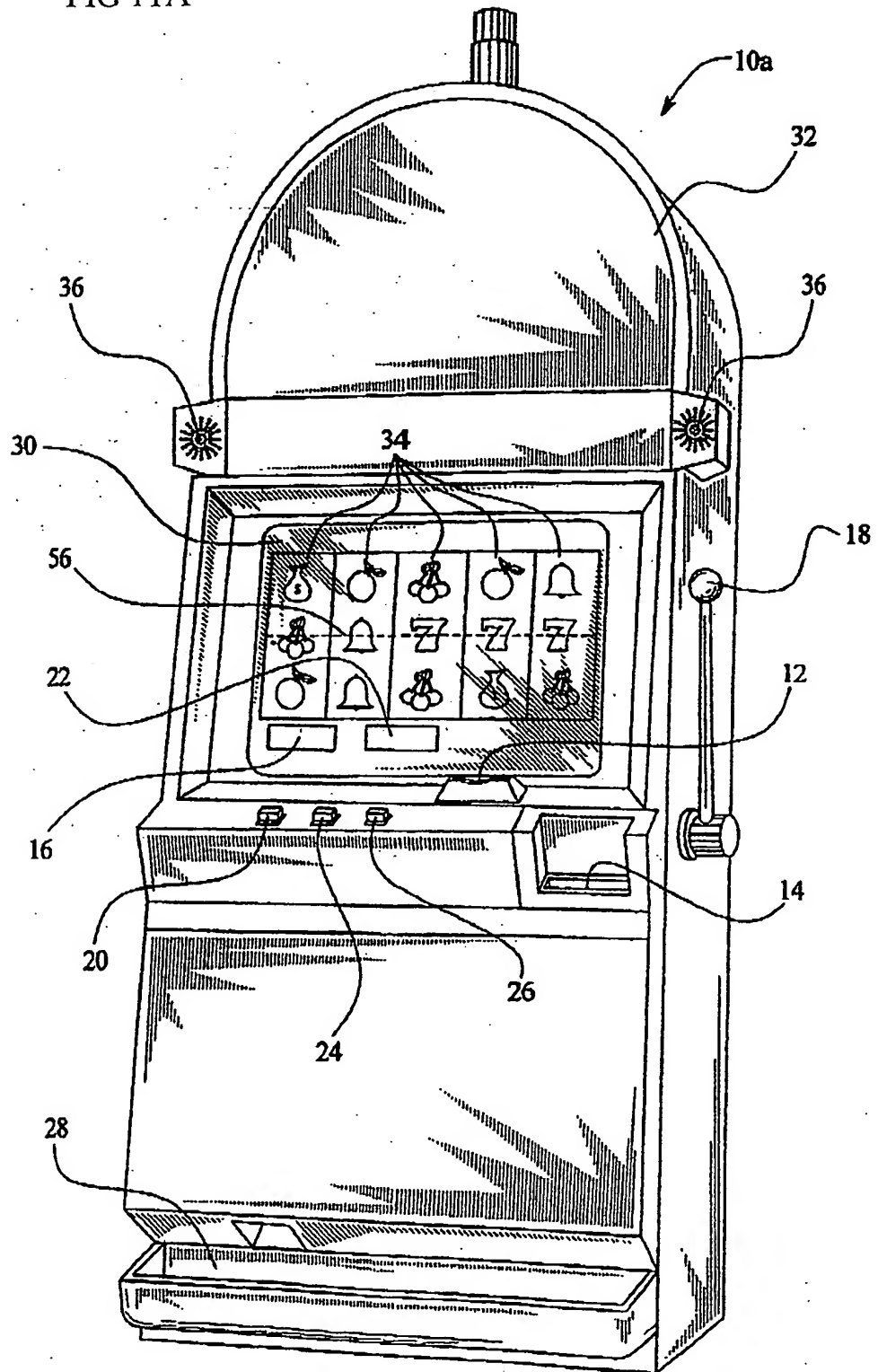


FIG 11B

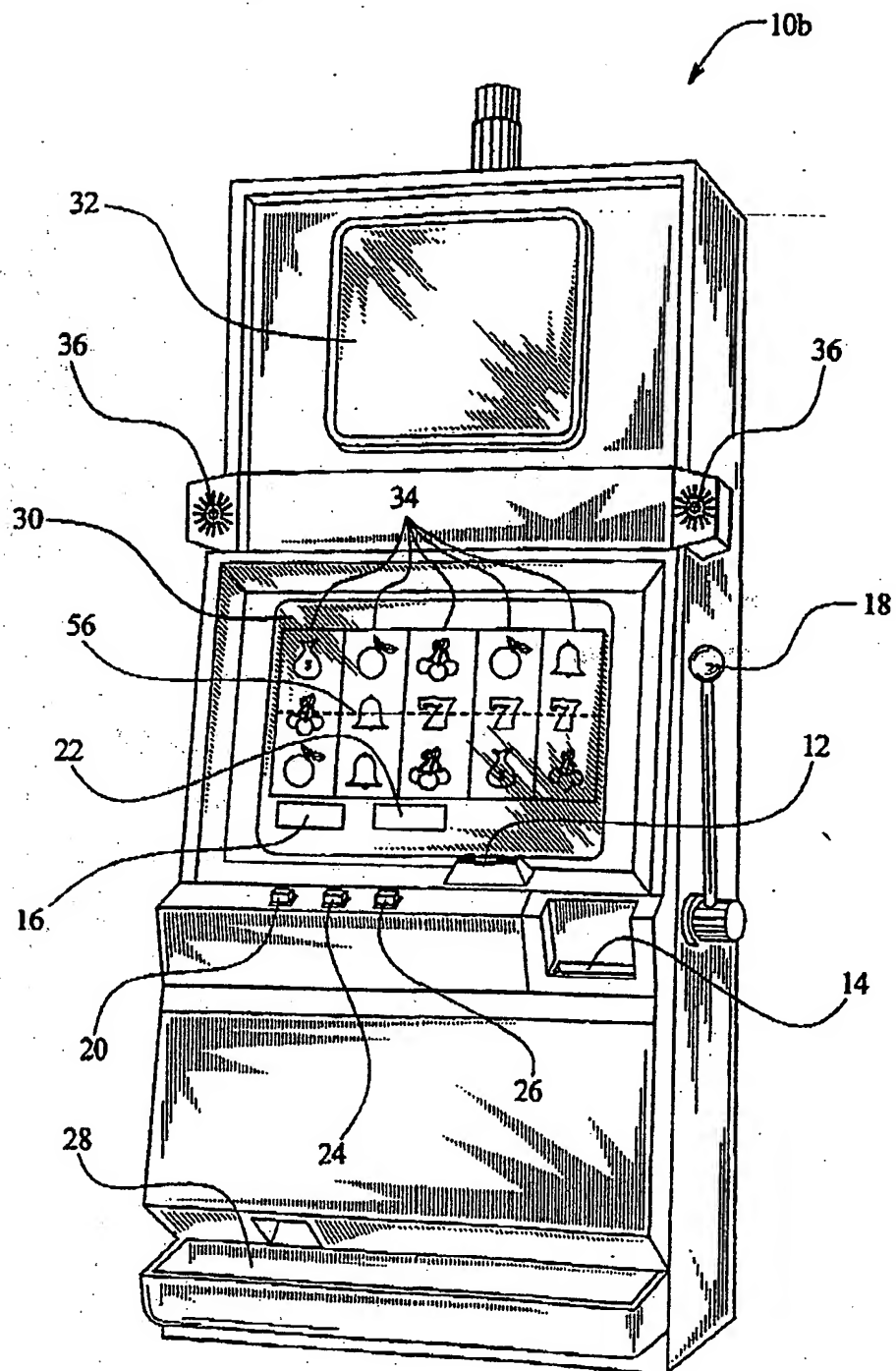


FIG 12

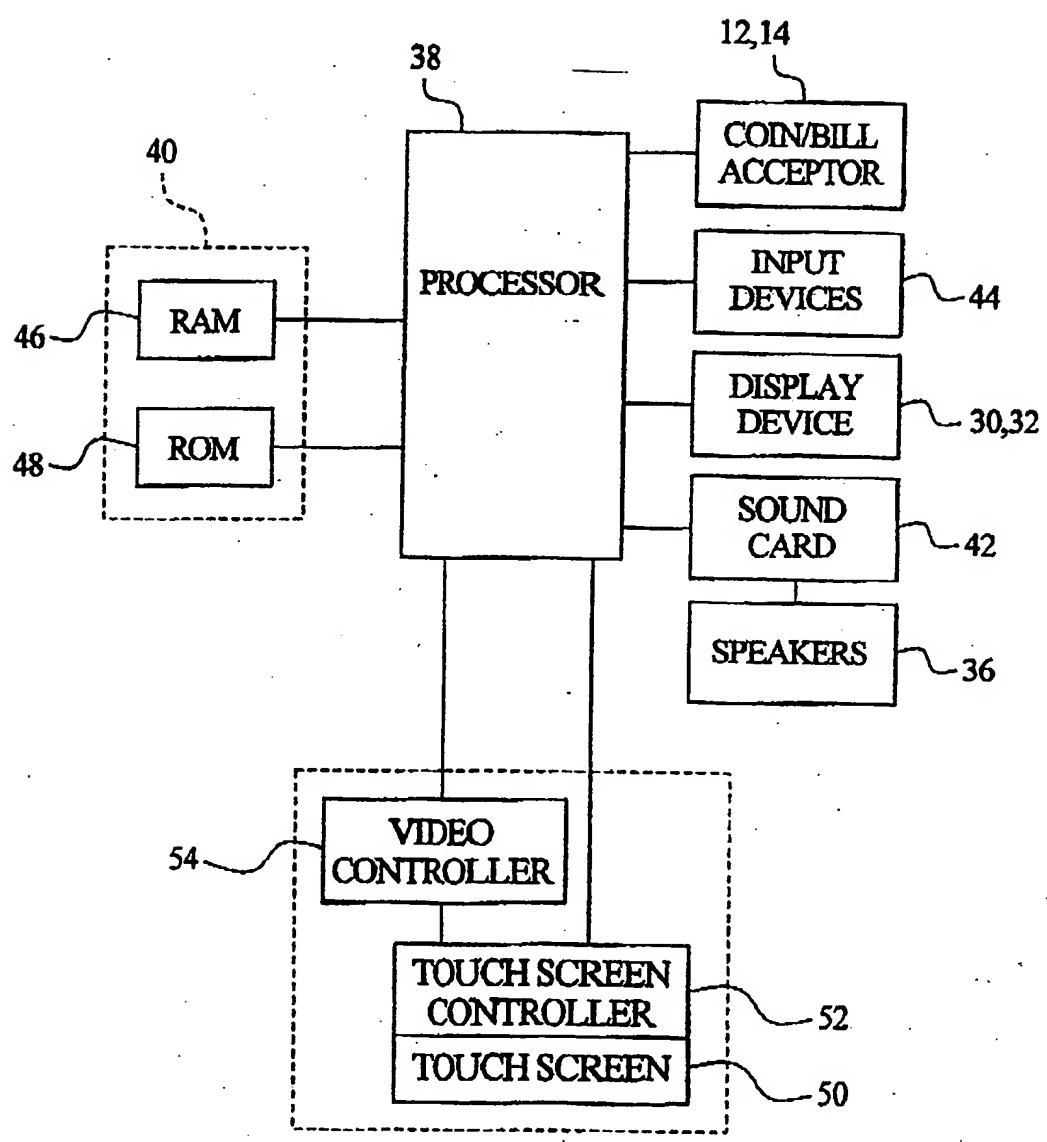


FIG 13

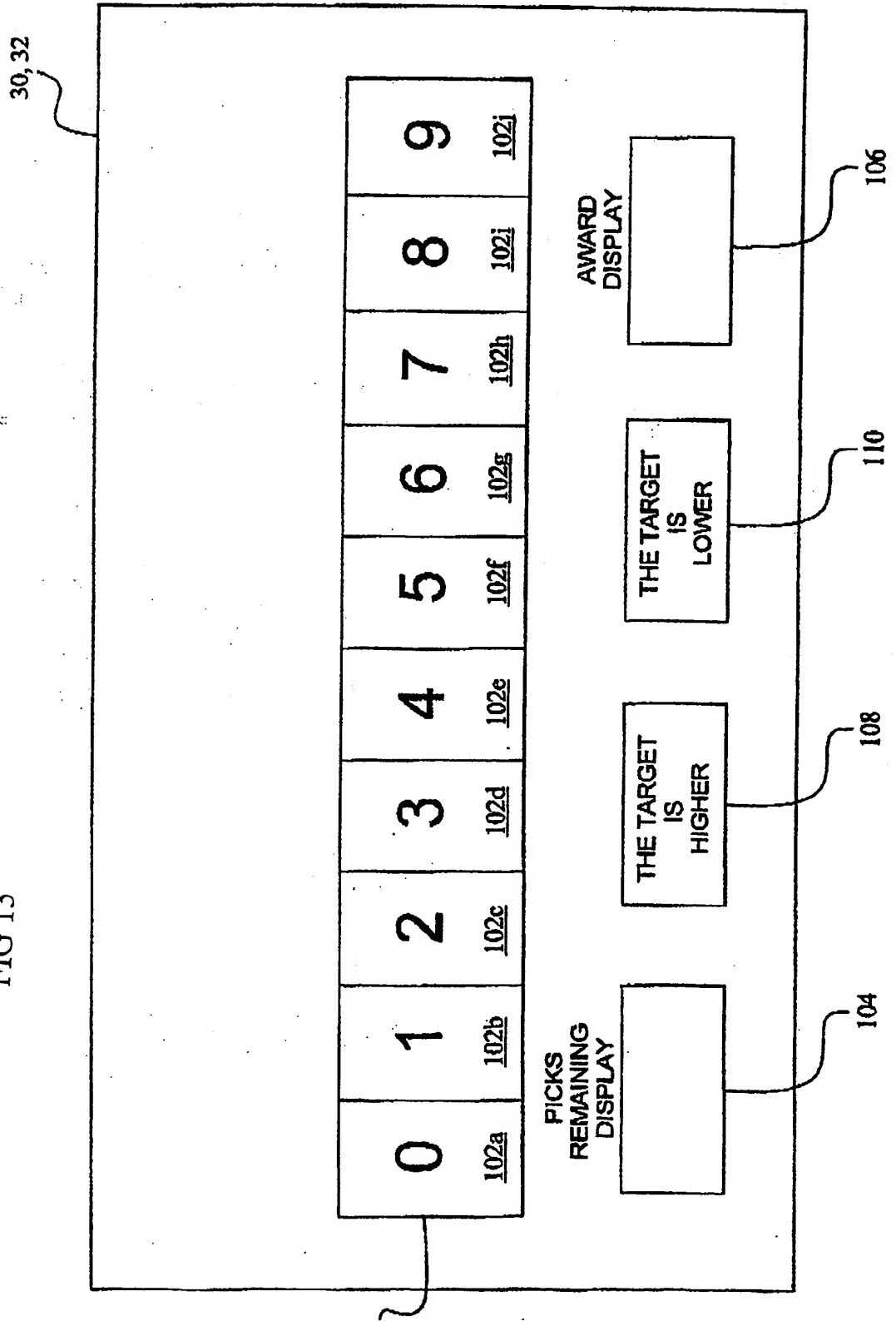


FIG 14

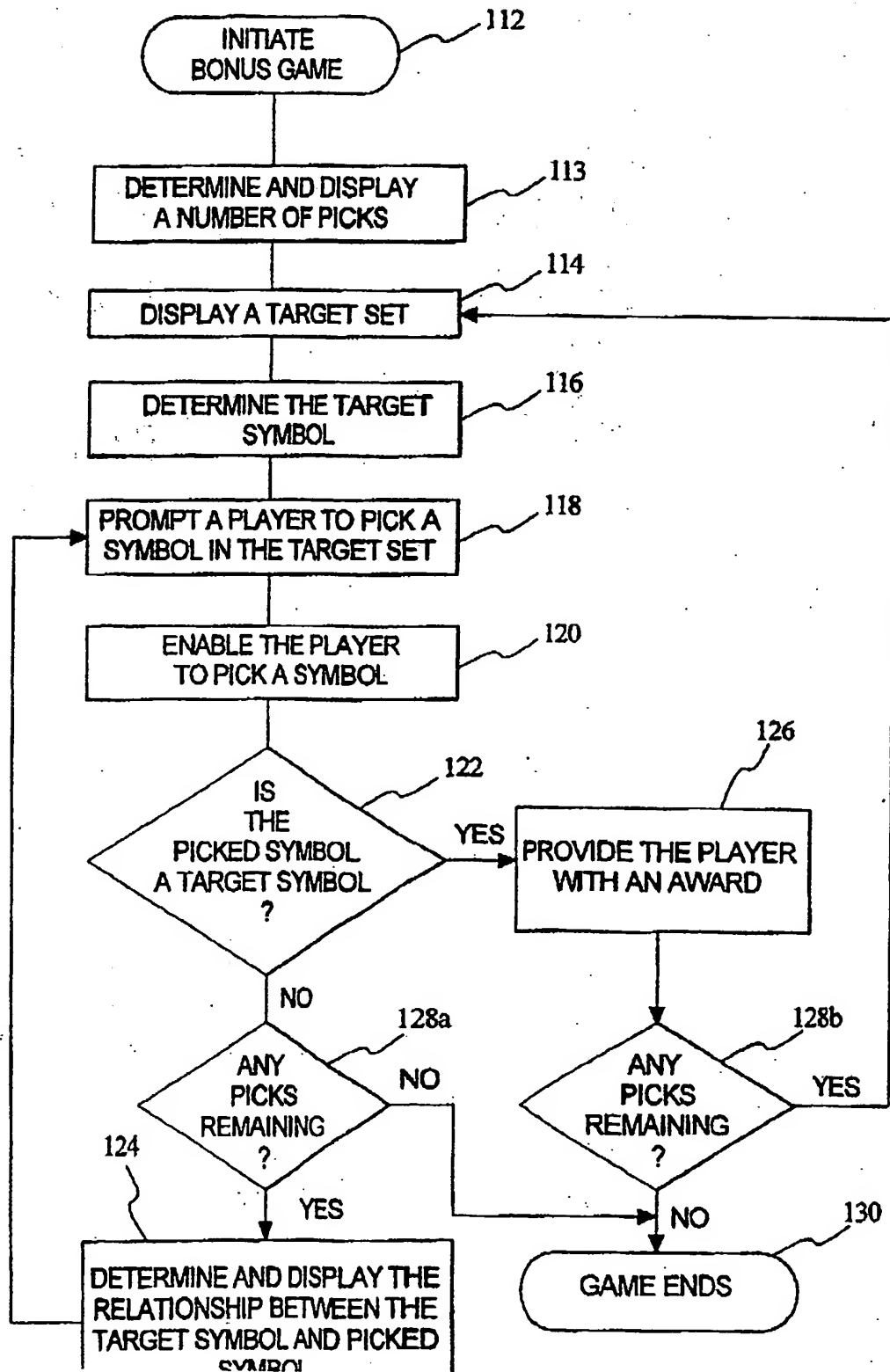


FIG 15A

30, 32

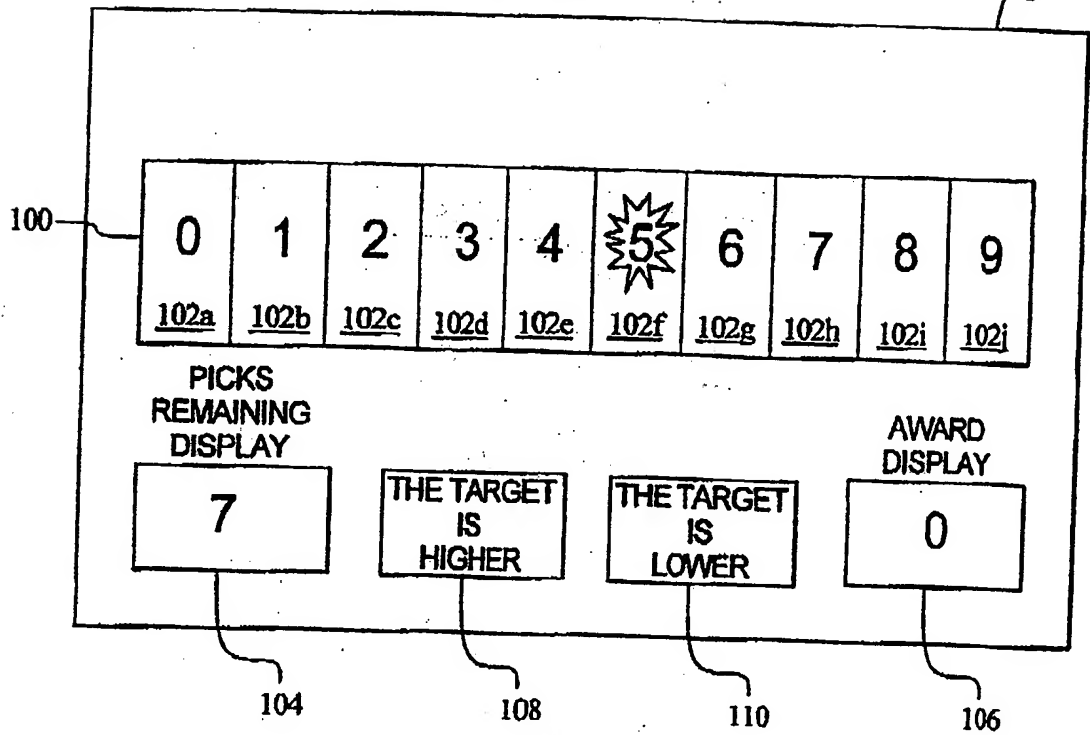
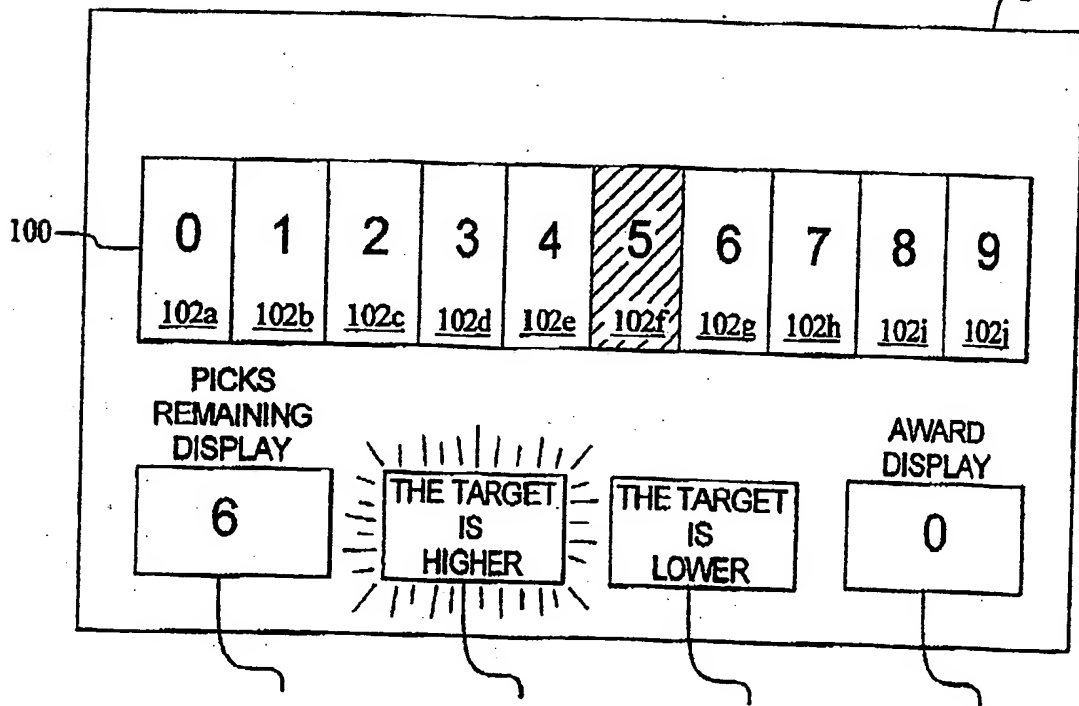


FIG 15B

30, 32



20/26

FIG 15C

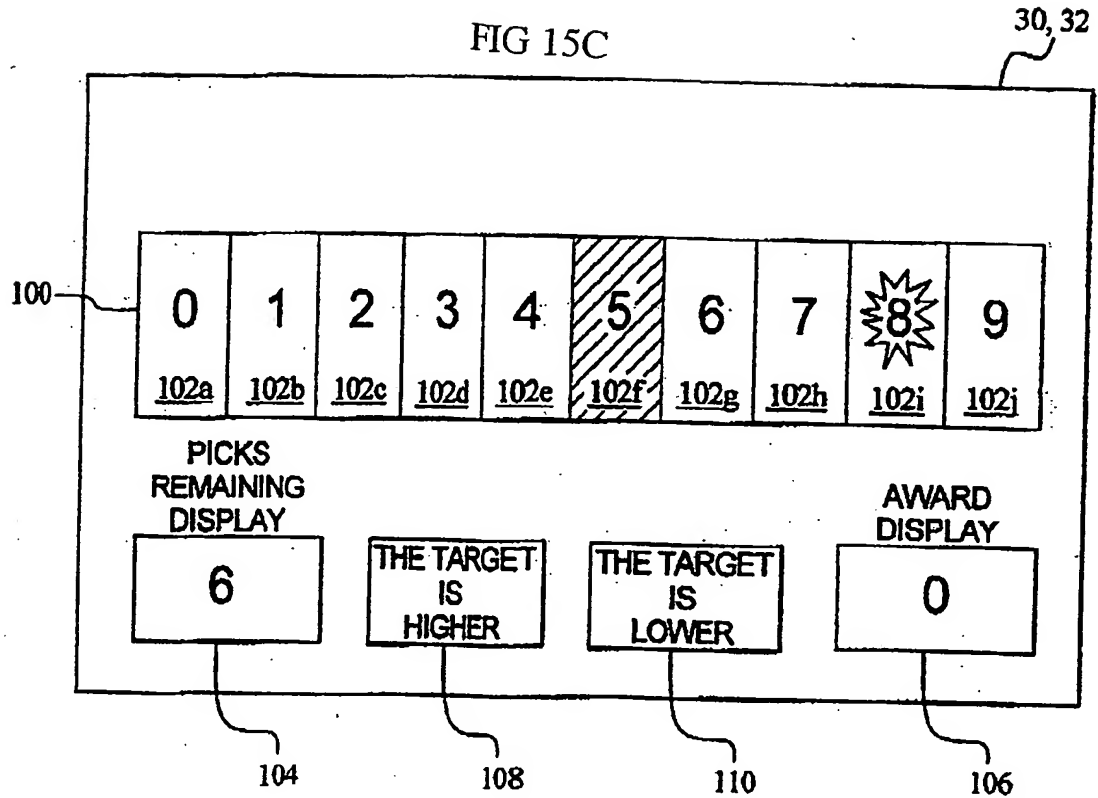


FIG 15D

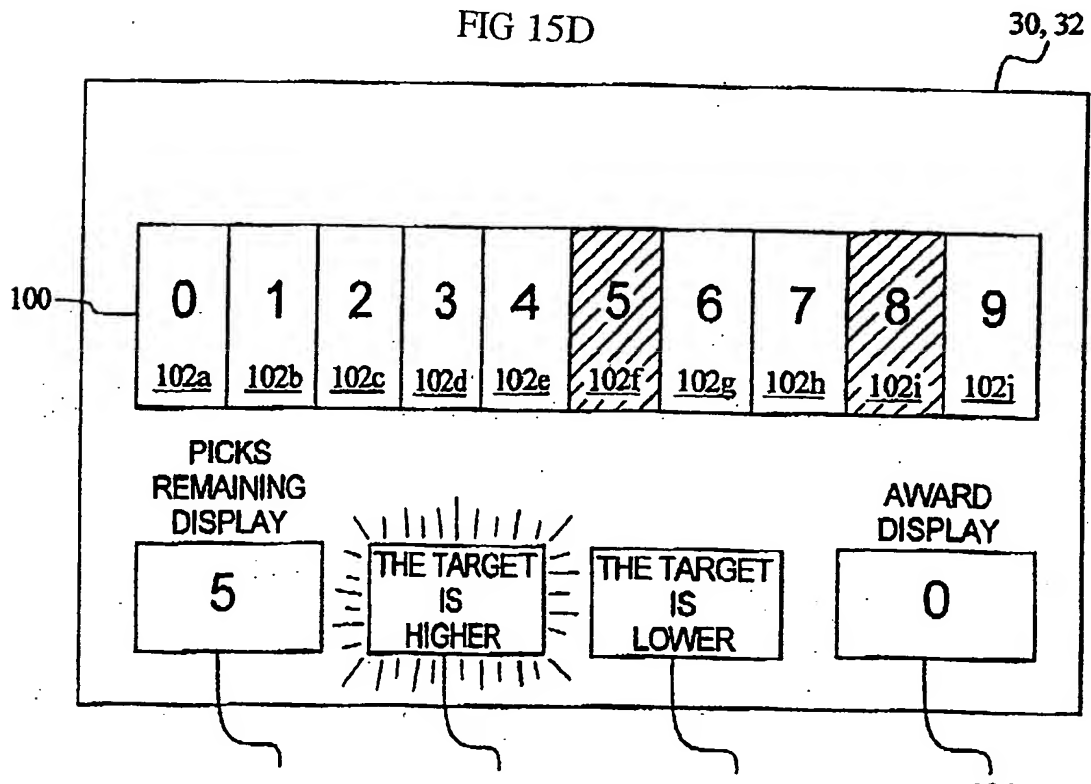


FIG 15E

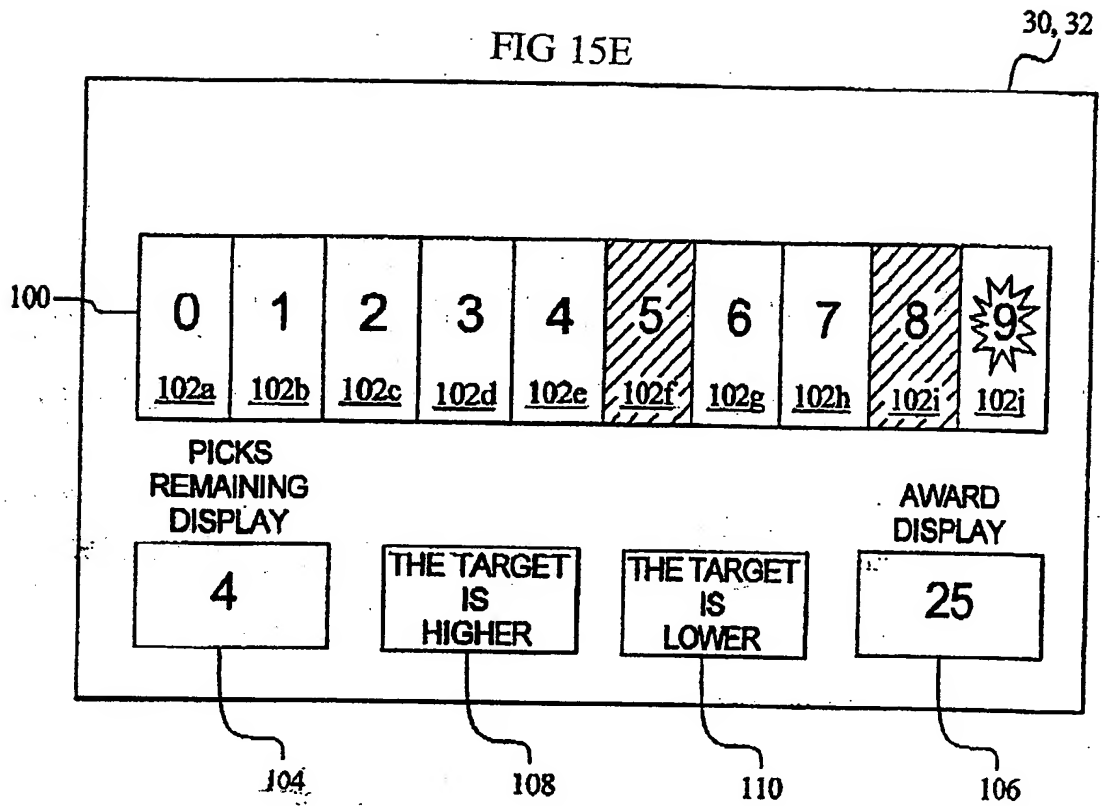


FIG 15F

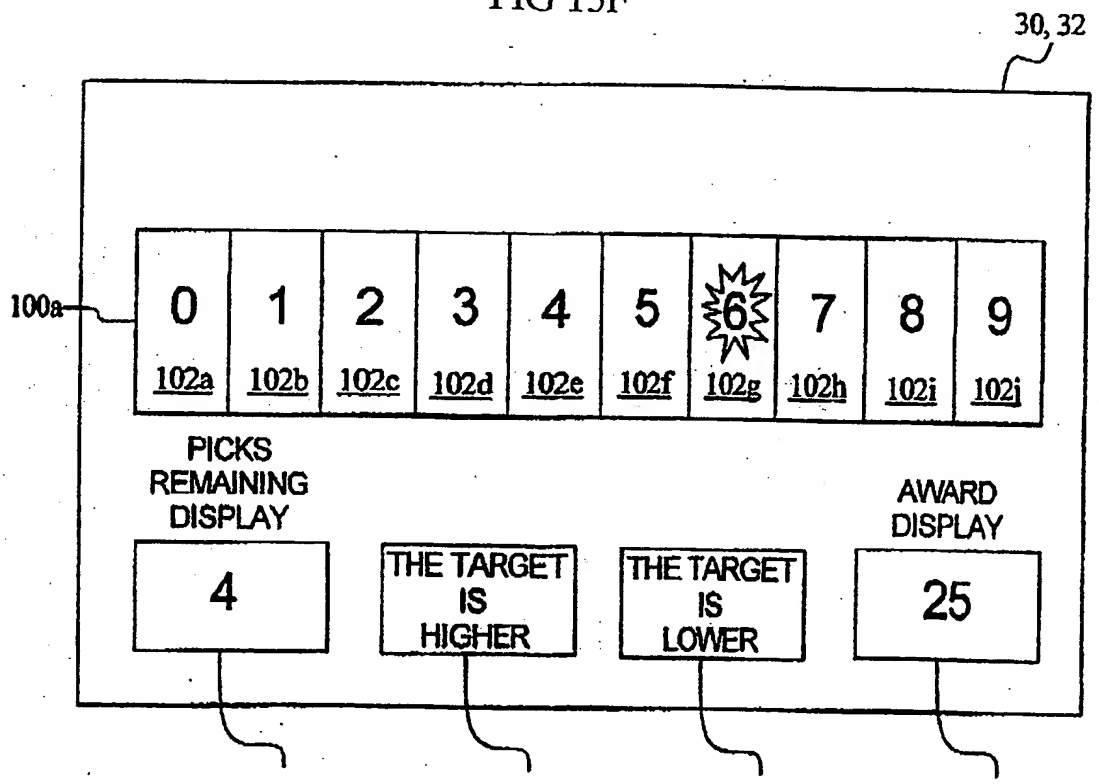


FIG 15G

30, 32

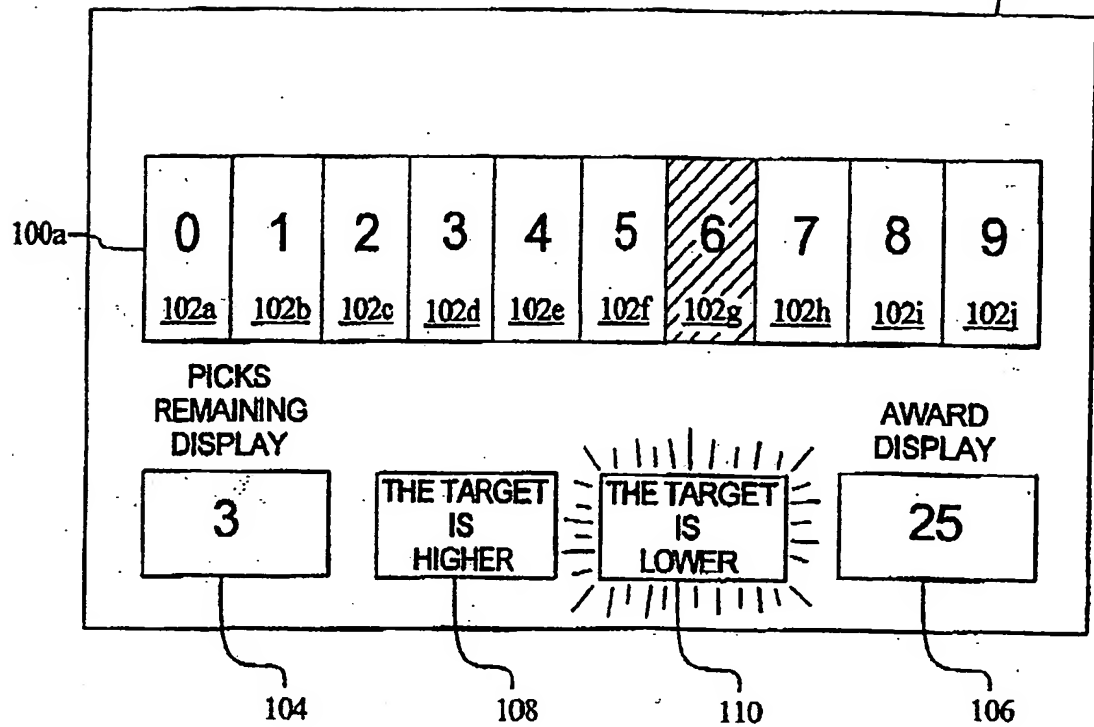


FIG 15H

30, 32

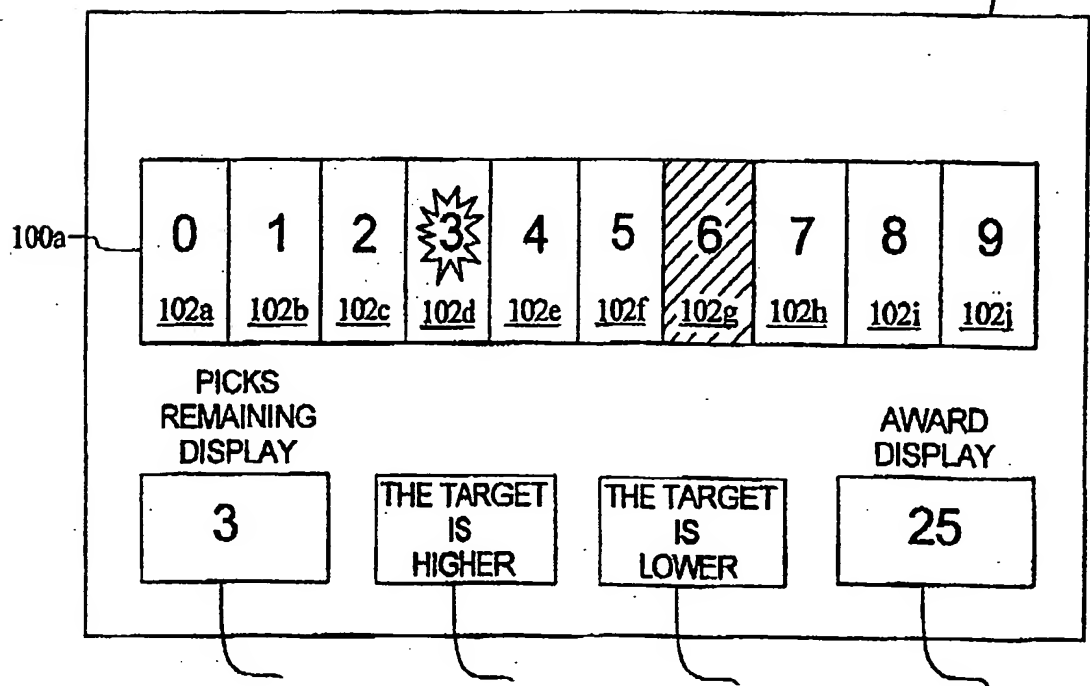


FIG 15I

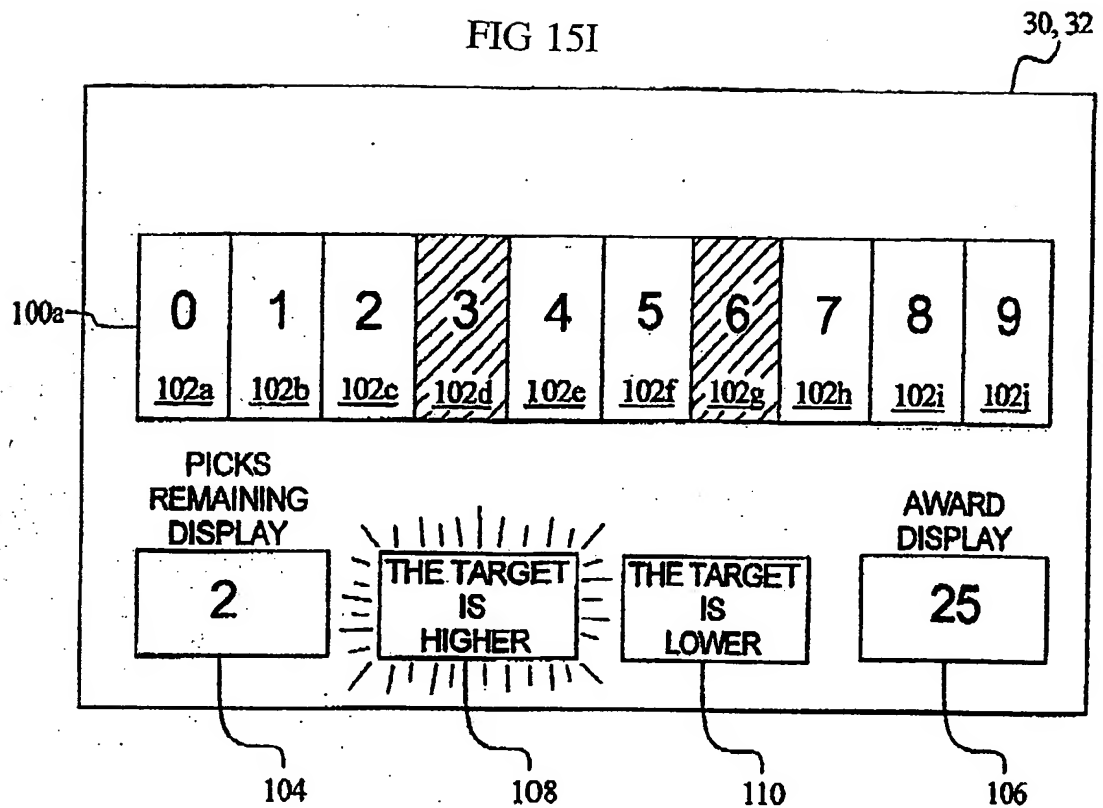


FIG 15J

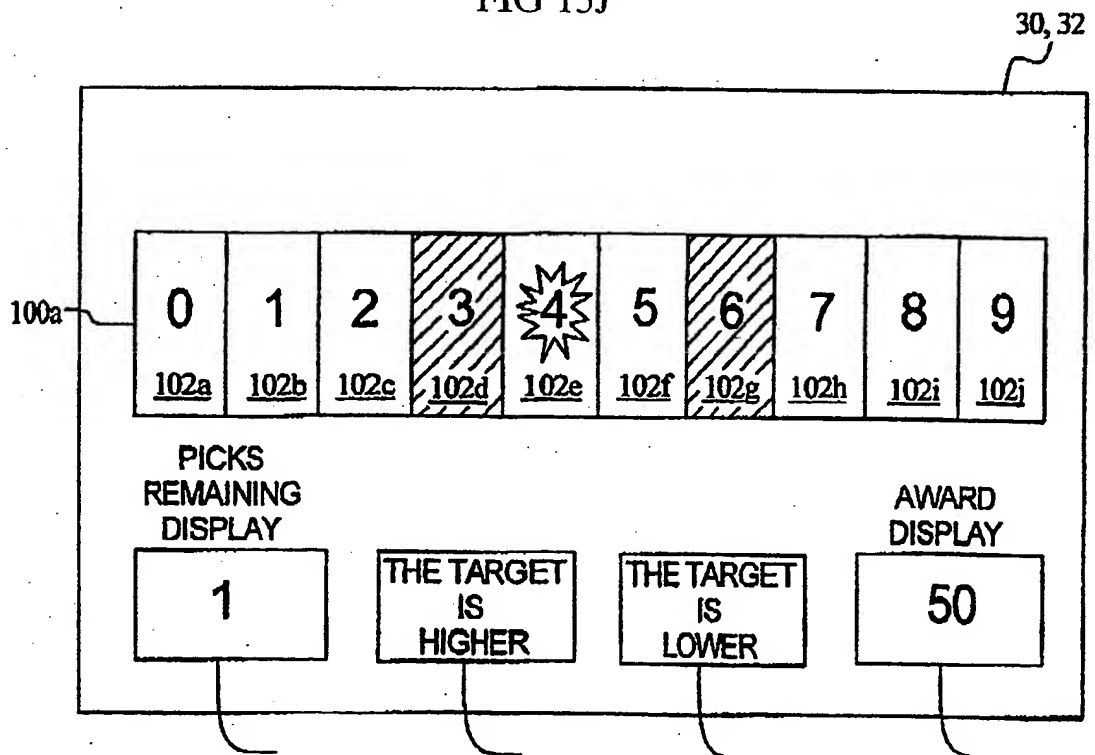


FIG 15K

30, 32

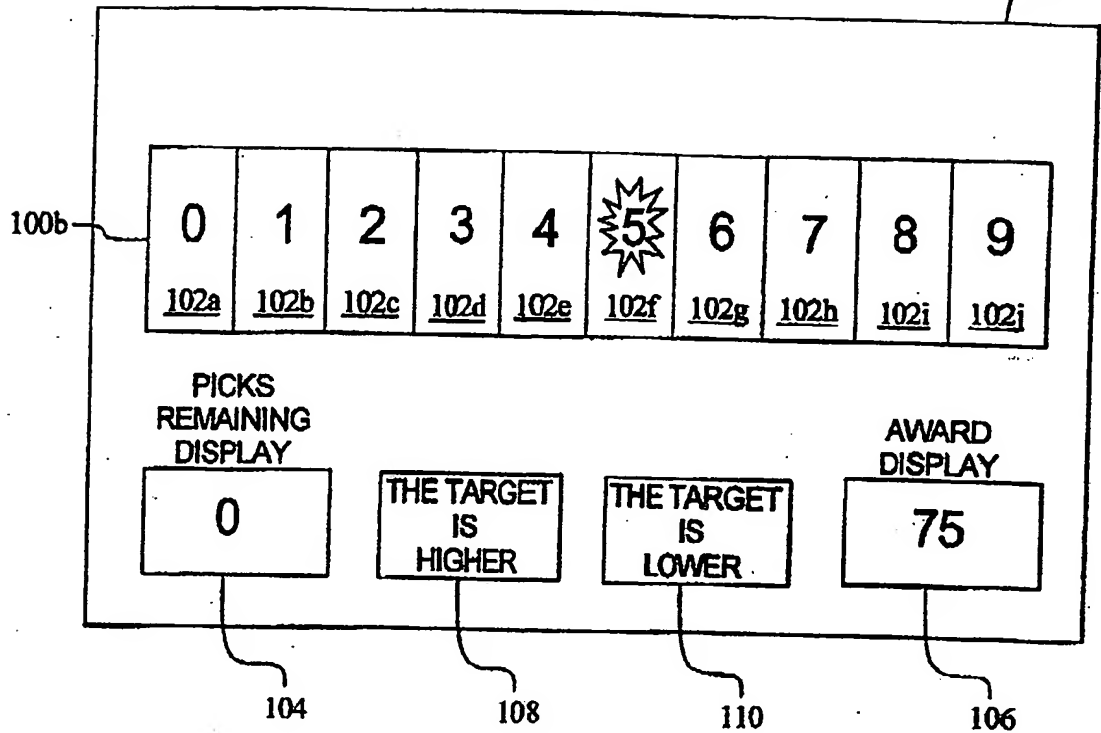


FIG 16

30, 32

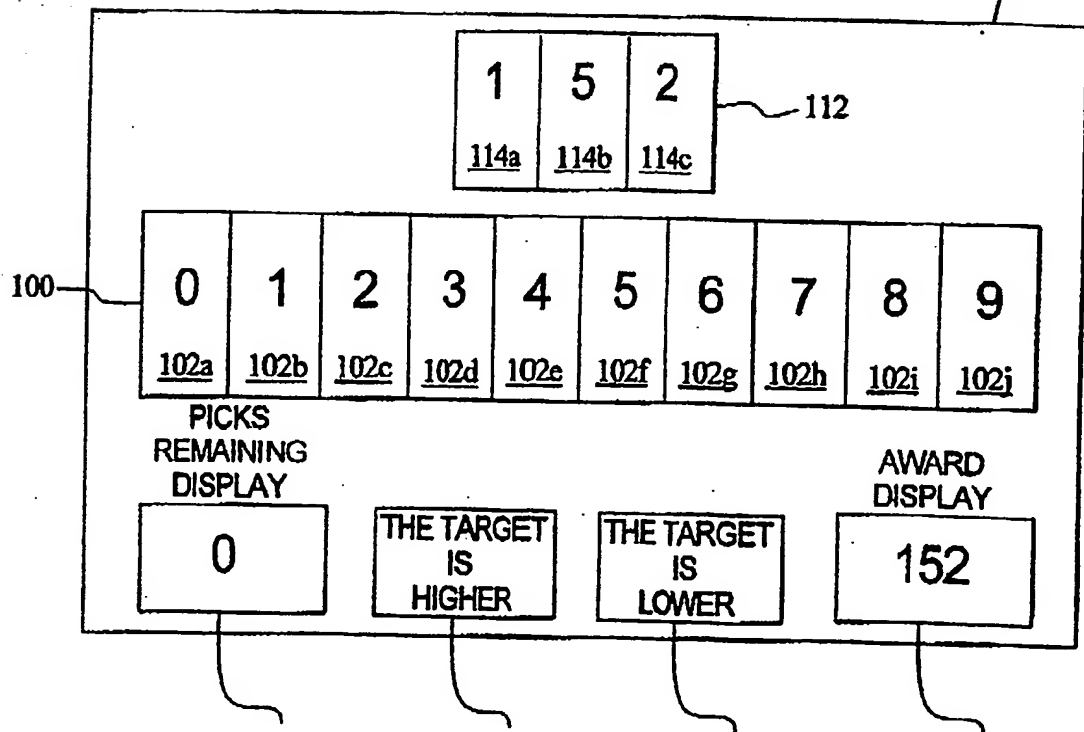


FIG 17

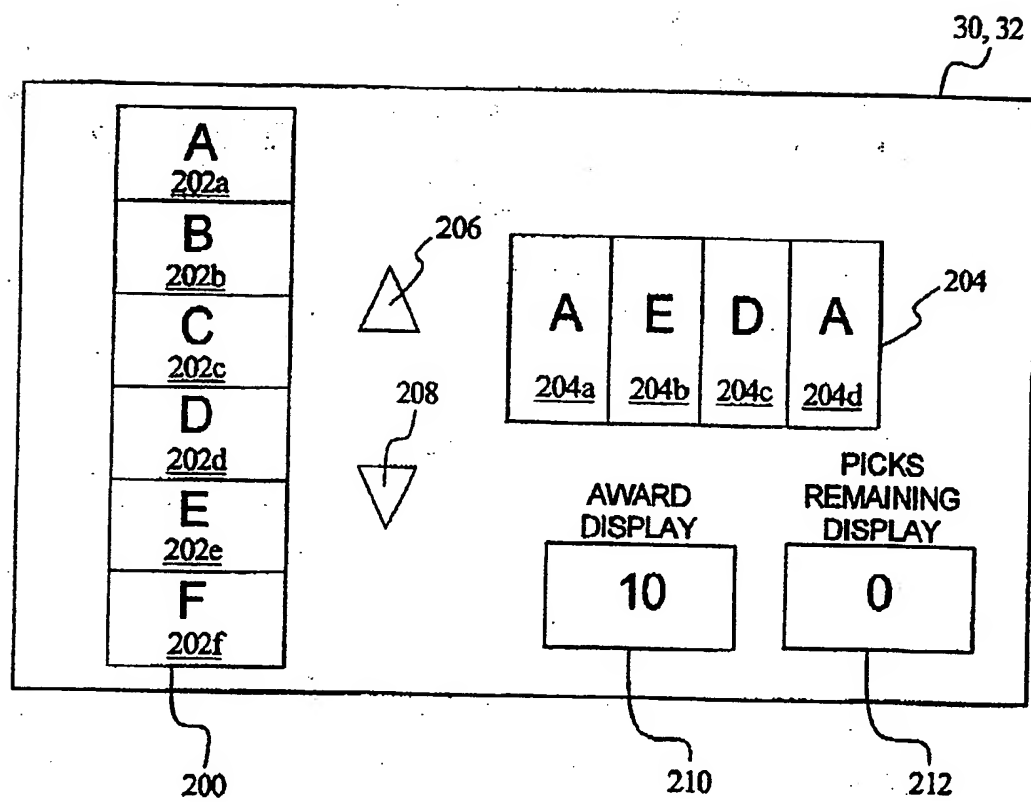
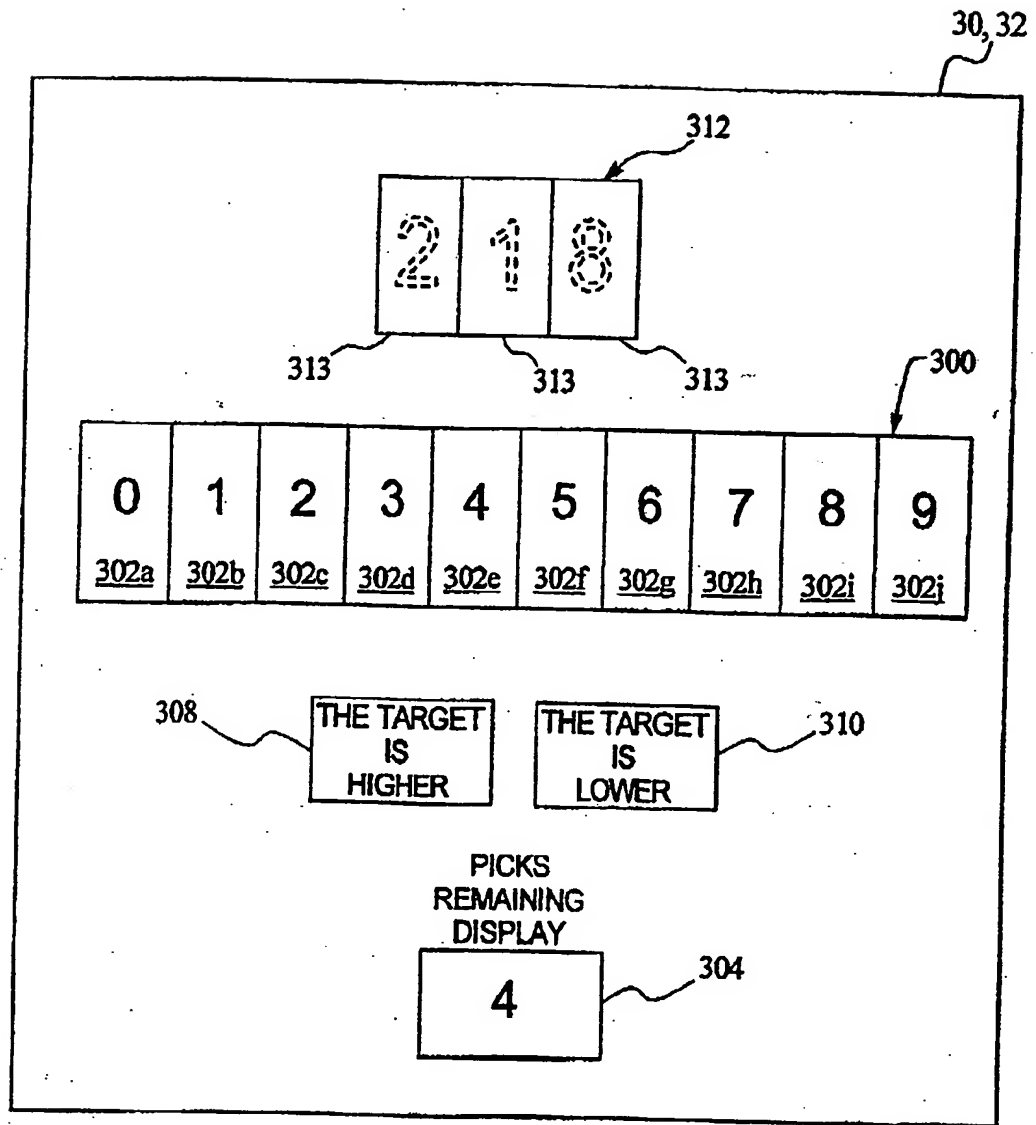


FIG 18



5

10 "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A PICK REDUCTION GAME"

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims priority from U.S. Patent Application No. 10/071,138, filed on February 8, 2002
15 entitled "Gaming Device Having a Related Symbol Selection Game," the specification of which is hereby included as Annex A to the description. The contents of Annex A and the Figures referred to therein forms part of the disclosure of the present invention.

20

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a gaming device having a pick reduction game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming
25 devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one known
30 method for enhancing player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the operation of the base game of the gaming device. The triggering event

temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the secondary or bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.

5 Bonus games exist that include reels having target symbols or target symbol combinations where the player receives a bonus award for obtaining the particular target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The bonus award may be a predetermined award or a random
10 award. In some bonus games, the bonus award is modified based on the number of attempts used by the player to obtain the target symbol or target symbol combination on the reels. The modified bonus award is provided to the player once the player obtains the target symbol or target
15 symbol combination on the reels.

One such bonus game is described in U.S. Patent No. 6,231,445, which is assigned to Acres Gaming, Inc. In this patent, several gaming machines having a plurality of reels are interconnected over a gaming network. Each of
20 the gaming machines displays a plurality of reels having various symbols to the player in a primary or base game. If the player obtains a predetermined winning combination of symbols on the reels after a spin, a bonus game is triggered and a bonus award is provided to start the bonus
25 game. In the bonus game, the bonus award immediately decreases after the first spin of the reels. Subsequently, the bonus award continues to decrease after each spin until the player obtains one of the winning symbols or winning symbol combinations on the reels. The player then
30 receives the modified bonus award.

Gaming devices that increase the opportunities to obtain awards and increase the size of the awards are desirable. Players are attracted to games that provide

several larger awards and the opportunity to obtain a very large award. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new games for gaming devices.

5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a gaming device having a pick reduction game and specifically, a bonus game. In one embodiment, primarily discussed herein, the gaming device displays a plurality of first selections, which are masked or hidden, to the player. Additionally, the gaming device displays a number of picks to the player. The number of picks is preferably greater than the number of first selections. However, in another embodiment, the number of picks may be equal to or less than the number of first selections.

The player uses the picks to pick selections from the plurality of first selections until the player picks a trigger selection. The number of picks are reduced by each pick by the player. Once the player obtains the trigger selection, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections to the player. The first and second selections may be displayed separately on the same display device or on different display devices, or the second selections may replace the first selections on the same display device. The player uses the remaining number of picks to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The plurality of second selections are associated with awards. Initially, the awards are masked or hidden from the player and an award is revealed after the player picks the second selection associated with that award. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's last pick or the player runs

out of picks before picking the trigger selection, the player receives a consolation award. In another embodiment such as in a primary game, the player does not receive any awards and the game ends.

5 In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with additional picks to choose second selections in the game. If the player has picks remaining after picking the trigger selection, the player also receives the additional picks to choose second selections
10 to receive extra awards. If the player does not have any picks remaining, the player just receives the additional picks and thereby has the minimum number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. In this embodiment, the player receives at least a minimum number of picks to
15 pick second selections and obtain awards in the bonus game.

The player's goal is to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections as quickly as possible so that the player has the maximum number of
20 picks to use to pick selections from the plurality of second selections. The player uses the picks to choose second selections from the plurality of second selections and accumulates the awards associated with each of the second selections picked by the player. The total
25 accumulated award obtained by the player when the player has no picks remaining is the award provided to the player at the end of the bonus game. In one embodiment, the awards include at least one relatively large award. In this manner, the player still has an opportunity to obtain
30 the relatively large award, even if the player has only one pick to use to choose selections from the plurality of second selections.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a

bonus symbol is associated with one or more of the plurality of first selections and/or one or more of the plurality of second selections. The bonus symbol provides the player with a predetermined or random number of additional picks in the bonus game. The player may use the additional picks to obtain the trigger selection from the plurality of first selections and thereby receive more picks to choose selections from the plurality of second selections. Additionally, if the player picks the bonus symbol from the plurality of second selections, the player obtains additional picks and thereby receives more awards and possibly, a relatively large award. In a further embodiment, at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

15 In a further embodiment, relationship indicators are displayed to the player and associated with the plurality of first selections. In one embodiment, the relationship indicators automatically indicate the location or relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the player's last selection or pick from the plurality of first selections. In another embodiment, the player may choose to receive a "hint" by pressing a button or selector and use the relationship indicators to indicate the relative location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections. If the player chooses to use the "hint" and thereby the relationship indicators, the player in one embodiment will lose one or more picks to obtain this advantage. Otherwise, the player does not have to use the relationship indicators and may proceed as described above.

30 In still a further embodiment, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections, and the plurality of second selections displayed to the player by the gaming

device are displayed in various shapes, characters or symbols. Preferably, the number of picks, the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections are designated with symbols or characters that are
5 associated with the theme of the game.

In an alternative embodiment, the first selections are displayed on a mechanical display. The selections on the mechanical display are covered by movable revealing members such as mechanical doors that move such as by
10 raising and lowering over the selections to reveal or hide the selections, respectively. In one aspect of this embodiment, the selections are displayed on a video display device and the mechanical doors slide over the display device. In another aspect of this embodiment, the
15 mechanical doors slide over mechanical reels, which spin to indicate one or more trigger selections.

In another alternative embodiment, a plurality of sets of first selections are displayed to a player. Each set includes at least one trigger selection.
20 Additionally, a picks remaining display is associated with each of the sets of first selections where a number of picks is indicated in each picks remaining display. The player uses the picks to pick first selections in each of the sets. The player continues to pick first selections
25 in each of the sets until the player picks the trigger selection in one or more of the sets or until there are no picks remaining in the sets. The number of picks indicated in each picks remaining display after the player is finished picking selections, is summed or totaled to
30 provide the player with a total number of picks remaining for the set of seconds selections. The player uses the total number of picks to choose second selections to obtain awards. Alternatively, the player must pick the

trigger in each set of first selections to get to the set of second selections. In further alternative embodiments, the player must pick the trigger selection in at least two of the sets of first selections, in one or more specific sets, or in any desired combination of sets.

Although the present invention is primarily discussed relative to the bonus game of a gaming device, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

10 It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a pick reduction game that provides an opportunity for a player to obtain a large award.

Another advantage of the present invention is to provide larger awards to players that increase player excitement and entertainment.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 1B is a front perspective of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Figs. 3A and 3B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating one embodiment of the present invention.

Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first four picks by a player from a plurality of first selections where the player chooses the trigger selection with the player's final pick in the game.

Figs. 4F and 4G are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating the first and only pick by a player from a plurality of second selections where the player picks the relatively large award.

Figs. 5A and 5B are enlarged front elevation views of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the plurality of first selections and the plurality of second selections include a bonus symbol.

Fig. 6 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention where the bonus game includes relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Fig. 7 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the player has an option of using the relationship indicators associated with the plurality of first selections.

Figs. 8A and 8B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the picker remaining display, plurality of first selections, and plurality of second selections are designated by different symbols.

Figs. 9A is an enlarged front elevation view of one

of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein mechanical doors cover the first selections and move or slide up and down to hide and reveal the first selections.

5 Fig. 9B is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the mechanical doors of Fig. 9A cover mechanical reels that display the first selections.

10 Fig. 10 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention wherein multiple sets of first selections are displayed to a player.

15 Figs. 11A, 11B, 12-14, 15A-15K and 16 to 18 are described in Annex A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

20 Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10.

25 Gaming device 10 in one embodiment has the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted in a cabinet. However, it should be appreciated

30 that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display

designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming
5 device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game
10 such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, and any of the bonus triggering events and bonus games associated with these primary games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

15 As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be
20 used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of
25 money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also
30 includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player

pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. Other bet or wager indicators such as a bet max button may
5 also be employed in the gaming device of present invention.

A player may cash out and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player cashes out,
10 the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

15 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. Gaming device 10 in
20 one embodiment displays a plurality of reels 34 such as three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not
25 limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video
30 form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor. Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably

correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for producing sounds such as music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. One or more secondary processors may also be employed in conjunction with the primary processor to control certain aspects of the game function. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen

50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money
5 in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific
10 integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to
15 provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40
20 are generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10, in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12
25 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop,
30 the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, in one embodiment gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of

gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begins a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use mechanical devices or a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. In one embodiment, the qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 initiates the secondary or bonus game of the present invention. Referring now to Figs. 3A and 3B, the bonus game includes a plurality of first selections 100 and a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of first selections or first selection set 100 includes at least two masked first selections 102. In Fig. 3A, there are four masked first selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. At least one trigger selection 102c is associated with one of the masked selections 102. The trigger selection may be designated with any symbol or character preferred by the game implementor to indicate that a particular selection is the trigger selection. A number of picks is associated with the plurality of first selections 100, as indicated

by the picks remaining display 104. Once the bonus game is initiated, the gaming device displays the plurality of first selections 100 and a number of picks in the picks remaining display 104.

5 In one embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is at least one less than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. Accordingly, the player will always have at least one remaining pick after
10 obtaining the trigger selection to choose at least one of the second selections. Therefore, the player will always have an opportunity or chance to obtain the relatively large award associated with the second selection even though the probability of obtaining that award is lower
15 than if the player has a larger number of picks.

In another embodiment, the number of selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 is equal to or greater than the number of picks initially provided to the player in picks remaining display 104. In this
20 embodiment, the player may obtain the trigger selection with the player's last pick or run out of picks before picking the trigger selection. In either case, the player does not have any picks remaining in the game and therefore, the player cannot pick from the plurality of
25 second selections. In one embodiment, if the player picks the trigger selection with the player's final pick or the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger selection in the bonus game, the player receives a consolation award and the bonus game ends. The consolation
30 award may be any award including, but not limited to, free spins, free games, multipliers and credits. In another embodiment, the game ends and the player does not receive any awards in the game. This game may be best suited for

a primary game where the player does not necessarily obtain an award in each game as is typical in bonus games. In such primary games a wager would be placed on the set of first selections. The amount of the wager could also
5 determine the number of picks in the first selections and/or additional picks in the second selections. Additionally, the amount of the wager could determine the number of sets of first selections provided to the player in the game. Varying the number of trigger selections
10 and/or the number of first selection sets varies the probability that the player will initiate the bonus game and thereby increases the players excitement and enjoyment of the game. It should also be appreciated that the number of first selections and the number of picks may
15 vary in a game.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with an additional number of picks to pick second selections in the bonus game. If the player picks the trigger selection before running out of picks in the
20 primary game, the player will also receive additional picks to choose second selections to obtain extra awards in the bonus game. If the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection in the primary game, the player receives only the additional picks and thus,
25 still has a minimum number of picks to choose second selections.

In a bonus game, the player uses the picks provided to the player by the gaming device to pick selections from the plurality of first selections 100. The player
30 continues to pick one of the selections 102 from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c. Once the player picks the trigger selection 102c, the gaming device displays a

plurality of second selections 200 to the player. In one embodiment, the second selections are displayed separately from the first selections on the same display device or on different display devices. In another embodiment, the
5 second selections replace the first selections on the same display device.

The player receives the number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 after the player picks the trigger selection 102c. In this example, the player
10 receives the maximum number of picks possible, which is one less than the number of picks provided to the player at the beginning of the game, if the player selects the trigger selection with the player's first pick. In any event, the player receives at least one pick if the player
15 selects or picks the trigger selection 102c with the final pick.

In Fig. 3B, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200 that include several selections 202a to 202l. Each selection 202 is associated with an award
20 203. Initially, all of the awards 203 are masked or hidden from the player. Once the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200, the award 203 that is associated with the picked selection is revealed or shown to the player. In
25 one embodiment, the awards 203 include a plurality of relatively small awards and one relatively large award. In Fig. 3B, the relatively large award is illustrated in selection 202k, which includes an award of five thousand. It should be appreciated that the awards 203 associated
30 with the selections 202 may include a plurality of relatively small awards, a plurality of relatively large awards, or any combination therein. Additionally, the number of selections 202 in the plurality of second

selections 200 may include any number of selections as desired by the game implementor. In one embodiment, the number of selections 202 and the plurality of second selections 200 is equal to or greater than the number of first selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100. It should be appreciated that the number of first selections 100 and the number of second selections 200 may include the same number or a different number of selections.

10 A picks remaining display 204 initially indicates the number of picks transferred from the picks remaining display 104 that the player received by picking the trigger selection 102c. In one embodiment, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 reduces
15 by one each time the player picks a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. In other embodiments, the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 204 decreases or increases by a predetermined or random number of picks. The total award display 206
20 indicates the accumulated award received by the player based on the awards that are revealed after each pick of a selection 202 from the plurality of second selections 200 by the player. The total award indicated by the total award display 206 when the player runs out of picks is the
25 total award provided to the player for that game.

Referring now to Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E, an example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device displays four selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d in a plurality of
30 first selections 100 to the player. As shown in Fig. 4A, the gaming device provides the player with five picks, as indicated by the picks remaining display 104, to begin the game. Thus, the player may receive a maximum of four

picks if the player obtains or picks the trigger selection with the player's first pick in the game. The minimum number of picks that the player can receive is one pick where the player picks the trigger selection with the
5 final pick in the game.

In Fig. 4B, the player picks selection 102c with the first pick in the bonus game. The selection 102c is not the trigger selection, however, and therefore the player must make another pick from the plurality of first
10 selections 100. The number of picks is reduced by one, from five to four.

Referring to Fig. 4C, the player now has four picks left in the game as indicated by the picks remaining display 104. Therefore, if the player picks the trigger
15 selection with this pick, the player will receive three picks to use when choosing selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. The player picks selection 102a with the second pick. Unfortunately, the selection 102a is not the trigger selection. The number
20 of picks is reduced by one, from four to three, and the player must make another pick from the plurality of first selections 100.

In Fig. 4D, the player picks again from the plurality of first selections 100 in the bonus game. With the third
25 pick, the player picks selection 102d from the plurality of first selections 100. The selection 102d is still not the trigger selection. Therefore, the number of picks is reduced by one again, from three to two, and now there is only one selection 102b remaining in the plurality of
30 first selections 100.

In one embodiment, the trigger selection 102b, which is the only remaining selection available to the player, is revealed to the player automatically. Thus, the player

receives the minimum number of picks which, in this example, is one, to pick selections 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Even though the player received the minimum number of picks, one, the player still has an
5 opportunity to pick or receive a relatively large award in the bonus game. Therefore, the probability that the player will pick the relatively large award with only one pick is less than if the player had more picks remaining. However, the player still has a slight probability or
10 chance to pick the relatively large award, which creates player excitement.

Referring to Fig. 4E, the player automatically receives the trigger selection 102b as described above. Thus, the player has one pick to use to pick a selection
15 202 from the plurality of second selections 200. Once the player obtains the trigger selection 102b, the gaming device displays the plurality of second selections 200 to the player and also transfers the number of picks indicated by the picks remaining display 104 to the picks
20 remaining display 204, which is associated with the plurality of second selections 200.

Referring now to Figs. 4F and 4G, the gaming device displays a plurality of second selections 200. A plurality of awards 203 (not shown) are associated with
25 the second selections 200. The awards are initially masked to the player and are revealed when the player picks a particular selection 202 from the plurality of selections 200. In Fig. 4F, the player uses the player's only pick to pick selection 202d from the plurality of
30 second selections 200. Fortunately, the player picks the selection associated with the relatively large award of five thousand. The player does not have any picks remaining and therefore the bonus game ends. However, the

player did pick and obtain the largest single award of five thousand in the bonus game. This award is transferred to the total award display 206 and is provided to the player because the bonus game has ended.

5 This example illustrates how the present invention maintains the level of excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game by enabling players to always have a chance or opportunity of obtaining the relatively large award or the single largest award in the game. After the bonus game
10 begins, the player's odds or chances for obtaining the relatively large award decrease after each pick by the player from the plurality of first selections 100 until the player obtains the trigger selection. However, the player still has a slight probability or chance of
15 obtaining the relatively large award even though the player may have only one pick to choose one of the second selections 200. Thus, the odds of obtaining the relatively large award in the bonus game decrease, but never reach zero, and thereby players always have a chance
20 to obtain the relatively large award.

Referring now to Figs. 5A and 5B, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where a bonus symbol 106 is associated with at least one of the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100.
25 In one embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more additional picks to the player if the player picks the selection 102 associated with the bonus symbol 106. In another embodiment, the bonus symbol provides one or more multipliers to the player.

30 In Fig. 5A, the bonus symbol is designated by a star. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol may be any symbol, character, or shape as desired by the game implementor. Also, the bonus symbol may provide the

player with additional picks, a multiplier which multiplies the present number of picks displayed in the picks remaining display 104 or modifies the picks in some other suitable manner. The bonus symbol may also be
5 associated with at least one of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200 wherein the bonus symbol may provide additional picks, multipliers or other modifiers to the player.

In Fig. 5B, the bonus symbol 208 is associated with
10 selection 202f. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbol 208 may be associated with one or more of the selections 202 in the plurality of second selections 200. In one embodiment, the bonus symbol 208 provides an additional pick to the player from the plurality of second
15 selections 200 when the player picks the selection 202 associated with the bonus symbol 208. The bonus symbol, therefore, enables the player to obtain additional picks in the bonus game and potentially receive extra awards and larger awards in the bonus game. In a further embodiment,
20 at least one additional pick is associated with one of the first or second selections.

Referring now to Fig. 6, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the plurality of
25 first selections are arranged in a column. Two relationship indicators, designated as an upward facing arrow 106a and a downward facing arrow 106b, indicate the relationship of the trigger selection with respect to the selection picked by the player. For example, if the
30 trigger selection is selection 102a and the player picks selection 102c, the gaming device illuminates or highlights the relationship indicator 106a to indicate that the trigger selection is higher than or above the

picked selection 102c. Likewise, if the trigger selection is lower or below the picked selection 102c, the relationship indicator or downward facing arrow 106b is illuminated or highlighted by the gaming device. The
5 relationship indicators enable the player to identify the relative location of the trigger selection more quickly and therefore enables the player to potentially receive more picks to use for picking selections from the plurality of second selections 200 (not shown).

10 Referring to Fig. 7, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the relationship indicators 110a and 110b indicate whether the target is higher or the target is lower than a picked selection, respectively. It should be appreciated that the
15 relationship indicators 110a and 110b may include words, phrases, characters or other designations that indicate the relationship of the trigger selection to the picked selection by the player.

In this embodiment, a player selectable button or
20 selector 108 is also displayed to the player. The button or selector 108 is designated with the question "HINT?" to enable the player to choose whether they want to receive an indication of the location of the trigger selection. If the player decides to receive a hint from the gaming
25 device about the location of the trigger selection in the plurality of first selections 100, the player presses or selects the button or selector 108. Then, one of the relationship indicators 110a or 110b is illuminated or highlighted to indicate the relationship of the trigger
30 selection to the last picked selection by the player.

In one embodiment, the gaming device deducts one or more picks from the player's total picks for providing the player with a hint or indication of the relative location

of the trigger selection. In this manner, the player may use the relationship indicators to try to obtain the trigger selection more quickly. However, if the player does not obtain the trigger selection after receiving the
5 hint, the player sacrifices additional picks. The player may opt not to receive any hints in the bonus game and proceed with selecting the selections 102 in the plurality of first selections 100 as described above. The hint button or selector 108 give the player the opportunity to
10 receive more picks than the player might receive if the player picked the selections without any hints.

Referring now to Figs. 8A and 8B, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the number of picks, the plurality of first selections 100
15 and the plurality of second selections 200 are displayed as different shapes or symbols. This embodiment shows that the number of picks 105 may be a number displayed in a display such as the picks remaining display 104 illustrated in Figs. 3A to 7, a number as shown in
20 Fig. 8A, or some other designation as desired by the game implementor. In Fig. 8A, the gaming device highlights or illuminates the remaining number of picks in the bonus game at any given time in the bonus game. Additionally, the plurality of first selections 100 and the plurality of
25 second selections 200 may be any shape, character, symbol or other designation as desired.

In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Figs. 9A and 9B, the first selections 100 are displayed on a mechanical display. In Fig. 9A, the trigger selection is
30 displayed on a display device such as a video display device and mechanical doors 208 cover the display device. Each selection 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d is covered by a mechanical door 208, which moves or slides up and down to

reveal or hide the selections, respectively. The doors 208 move or slide within channels (not shown) or similar devices that are connected to the gaming device. After the player picks a selection, such as selection 102c, the
5 door 208 associated with that selection slides upward or opens to reveal that selection. Once the player picks the trigger selection or when the player runs out of picks, any doors 208 that are in the open or upward position, drop down to cover or hide the selections.

10 In Fig. 9B, the doors 208 cover mechanical reels 34, which include a plurality of symbols having the trigger selection. Initially, the doors 208 are closed or cover the reels 34. The gaming device spins or activates the reels 34. Once the reels stop spinning, one or more
15 symbols are indicated on the reels where one of the symbols represents the trigger selection. The player picks the selections 102 until the player picks the trigger selection 102c or until the player runs out of picks. The doors 208 move upward, or open, to reveal the
20 selections 102 after the player picks the selections, and close or lower when the game ends as described above. It should be appreciated that any suitable covering or revealing panel or member could be employed to reveal the selections.

25 In another alternative embodiment illustrated in Fig. 10, several sets of first selections 100a, 100b and 100c are displayed to the player in the bonus game. Additionally, the sets of first selections are associated with picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c. In
30 this illustration, the first set of first selections 100a includes selections 102a, 102b, 102c and 102d. The second set of first selections 100b includes selections 102e, 102f, 102g and 102h. The third set of first selections

includes selections 102i, 102j, 102k and 102l. It should be appreciated that any number of selection sets 100 and associated picks remaining displays 104 may be displayed to the player. It should also be appreciated that any
5 number of selections 102 may be included in the selection sets 100.

In this alternative embodiment, the selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 are initially masked or hidden from the player. Each picks remaining display
10 104a, 104b and 104c indicates a number of picks to be used to choose selections in the associated selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c. It should be appreciated that the picks remaining displays 104 may indicate the same number of picks, a different number of picks or any combination
15 therein. The player picks selections 102 in each of the selection sets 100 until the player picks the trigger selection 102b, 102h and 102i in each of the selection sets, or until the player runs out of picks for one or more of the selection sets. In one embodiment, the number
20 of picks remaining for each of the selection sets 100a, 100b and 100c is indicated in the corresponding picks remaining displays 104a, 104b and 104c, after the player is finished picking selections in the selection sets, is summed or totaled and indicated in the total picks
25 remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that the individual number of picks associated with each set of first selections may be added, multiplied or combined in any manner as desired to achieve the total number of picks remaining in the game.

30 The total number of picks indicated in total picks remaining display 210 is the number of picks provided to the player to choose second selections to obtain awards. For example in Fig. 10, the number of picks indicated in

picks remaining display 104a is two, the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104b is zero and the number of picks indicated in picks remaining display 104c is one. Therefore, the total number of picks available to the player to pick second selections in the game is three, as indicated by the total picks remaining display 210. It should be appreciated that other suitable methods may be used with the plurality of first selections sets to obtain picks in the second selection sets. For example in one embodiment, the player must pick the trigger selection in all of the first selection sets to obtain picks for the second selections. Similarly, in other embodiments, the player must pick at least two of the trigger selections, specific trigger selections or any combination therein to obtain picks for the second selections.

While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.

ANNEX A

GAMING DEVICE HAVING A RELATED SYMBOL SELECTION GAME

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one way to enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having a secondary or bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the base game operation of the gaming device. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts further base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives a bonus award, and returns to the base game.

Currently, gaming machines or devices such as slot machines provide bonus games wherein a player has one or more opportunities to select one or more symbols from a plurality of possible symbols. If the player selects one of the designated winning symbols or a winning combination of symbols, the game awards the player a bonus value such as credits. The outcome depends upon the particular symbol or symbols obtained by the player. If the player selects a terminating symbol, the game ends.

One known gaming device is the SPELLBINDER™ gaming

device. For the bonus game of the SPELLBINDER™ gaming device, the gaming device displays the numbers one to twelve to a player. The gaming device selects one of the numbers from the set of numbers. The gaming device
5 requires the player to input whether the player believes that the next number will be higher or lower than the selected number. If the player picked correctly, the gaming device provides an award to the player and repeats the process. If the player does not pick correctly, the
10 bonus game ends.

Other various bonus games have been associated with gaming machines. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide new bonus games for gaming machines.

15

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device and in particular a secondary or bonus game of a gaming device that includes at least one target set. The target set has
20 a plurality of symbols including at least one symbol which is randomly designated to be the target symbol. The gaming device enables a player to pick symbols from the target set until the player selects the target symbol or runs out of picks. In one embodiment, the player receives
25 a predetermined number of picks when the game begins. After the player picks a symbol, a relationship indicator identifies the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. If the picked symbol is not (or does not match) the target symbol, the
30 relationship indicator indicates the relationship of the target symbol to the picked symbol. The player continues to pick symbols from the target set until the player obtains the target symbol or runs out of picks.

Preferably, the player receives an award for picking the randomly designated target symbol. It should be appreciated that the number of or type of target symbols in each target set may vary. Also, the target symbols may
5 be the same symbols, different symbols or any combination of symbols in each bonus game.

In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a plurality of target sets and provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in each set. In one
10 embodiment, the player has a total cumulative number of picks the player can use in selecting symbols in all of the target sets. Each target symbol is associated with an award and the player's total award is based on the sum of the individual awards for each picked target symbol. It
15 should also be appreciated that the processor or controller of the gaming device could randomly determine the awards for the target symbols. In accord with one aspect of the invention, each award is associated with a probability of being associated with a target symbol such
20 that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to the player based on the target symbols picked by the player. In one such embodiment, the symbols in each
25 target set are numbers, such as the integers from zero to nine, and the target symbol is one of the numbers. When the player picks the target number, the gaming device uses the picked target number to determine the player's award. In one embodiment, the player receives the sum of the
30 awards associated with each picked target symbol in a target set or sets. In an alternative embodiment, the player could receive an award or combined award based on completing an award combination. In this alternative

embodiment, the award or combined award is a combination of the target numbers. The combination is formed by placing the target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked or alternatively, 5 in another suitable order. Each picked target number makes up a digit of the combined award. If the player picks several target numbers, the player's award is an order of the digits of the target numbers.

In a further embodiment, the gaming device provides 10 the player with a number of picks. The gaming device also displays a masked combination of target numbers. The combination is formed by randomly selecting and placing target numbers in the combination based on the order that the target numbers are picked by the processor or in 15 another suitable order. The combination may also be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number makes up a digit in the combination. If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award to the 20 player. The award in one embodiment is based on the number of picks that the player has remaining. In one alternative embodiment, the player uses the player's remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another 25 bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards.

In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target symbols in a target 30 combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target

symbol combination.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the gaming device increases because the player does not know when the player's picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

Although the present invention is discussed relative to a bonus game of a gaming machine, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a related symbol selection game.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 11A is front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 11B is front perspective view of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 12 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 13 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B, which illustrates one embodiment of the present invention where the symbols in the target set are numbers.

Fig. 14 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of the

present invention implemented in a bonus game.

Figs. 15A and 15B are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by a player in a target set and
5 the response by the gaming device.

Figs. 15C and 15D are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by a player in the target set and the response by the gaming device.

10 Fig. 15E is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by a player in the target set, which is the target symbol, and an award associated with the target symbol.

15 Figs. 15F and 15G are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick by the player in a new target set, which is the fourth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

20 Figs. 15H and 15I are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a second pick by the player in the target set, which is the fifth overall pick in the bonus game, and the response by the gaming device.

25 Fig. 15J is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a third pick by the player in the target set, which is the sixth overall pick in the bonus game, that results in a second target symbol and an award.

30 Fig. 15K is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a first pick in a new target set, which is the seventh overall and final selection in the bonus game, that

results in a third target symbol and an award.

Fig. 16 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention where the bonus game award equals the value of a target symbol combination.

Fig. 17 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 18 is an enlarged front elevation view of the display devices of Figs. 11A and 11B illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention wherein the bonus game includes a target symbol combination.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 is in one embodiment a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted on a console or cabinet. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 11A and 11B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a

detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other storage or memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop
5 personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of their bonus games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be
10 in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

As illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket
15 vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit
20 display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

25 As shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player
30 pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. The gaming device can also include other conventional

wagoring indicators such as a bet max button

A player may "cash out" and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player "cashes
5 out," the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

10 Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 11A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 11B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. The illustrated
15 gaming device 10 displays a plurality of reels 34 (i.e., five reels 34) in video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of
20 physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display
25 device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor.

Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated
30 with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters; places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 12, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 12, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38

and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or individually referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 is generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 11A, 11B and 12, to operate the gaming device 10 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. In the slot embodiment, the reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, gaming device 10 may also give players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use a video-based central display

device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. The qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 automatically initiates the bonus game of the present invention.

Referring to Fig. 13, one embodiment of the display device 30 or 32 of the present invention is illustrated. The display device 30 or 32 displays a target set 100 including a plurality of player selectable symbols 102a to 102j (generally referred to as symbols 102). At least one of the symbols 102 in the target set 100 is randomly determined by the processor as the target symbol for each play of the bonus game. Although this embodiment shows one target set, it should be appreciated that in other embodiments, a bonus game may include multiple target sets. In such an embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick a symbol in each target set. The gaming device provides an award to the player for each picked target symbol in the target sets.

In the illustrated embodiment, the symbols are numbers and particularly integers from zero to nine. The symbols, however, may be any suitable symbols as desired.

Also, the numbers are preferably displayed in sequential order starting with the lowest value on the left to the highest value on the right. It should be appreciated that any logical order may be displayed to a player based on the symbols being used in the bonus game. The order of the symbols (i.e., zero to nine) in this embodiment illustrates the relationship of the symbols to one another.

The display device includes a picks remaining display 104, an award display 106 and relationship indicators 108 and 110.

The picks remaining display 104 indicates the number of picks that are remaining in a bonus game. At the start of a game, the gaming device determines the total number of picks for that bonus game and displays the number of picks in the picks remaining display 104. The picks remaining display 104 decreases by one after each pick by a player. Thus, at any point in the game, the player knows how many picks are remaining in that game and may adjust the player's strategy accordingly. When the picks remaining display indicates that there are no picks remaining in a game, the bonus game ends.

The award display 106 indicates the total award received by a player in the bonus game. During a bonus game, any awards received by a player are added to the award indicated by the award display 106. Once a bonus game ends, the total award indicated by the award display 106 is provided to the player.

The relationship indicators 108 and 110, indicate the relationship between a picked symbol and the target symbol in the target set. In the illustrated embodiment in Fig. 13, the target set 100 includes ten symbols 102a to 102j,

designated with the numbers zero through nine. Since the target set includes numbers, the relationship indicators 108 or 110 indicate whether a target number is higher or lower than a picked number in a target set. If the target
5 number is higher than a picked number, the relationship indicator 108 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this relationship to the player. If the target number is lower than a picked number, the relationship indicator 110 is highlighted or illuminated to indicate this
10 relationship to the player. It should be appreciated that the relationship indicators 108 and 110 may indicate any relationship between a target symbol and a picked symbol. Although there are two relationship indicators in this illustration, a gaming device may have one or more
15 relationship indicators as desired by the game implementor.

One embodiment of the bonus game of the present invention which includes multiple target sets operates according to the flow diagram in Fig. 14. The gaming
20 device initiates a bonus game as indicated by block 112. Initially, a player receives a predetermined number of picks to start a bonus game as indicated by block 113. However, it should be appreciated that the number of picks may be randomly determined or be any number desired by the
25 implementor. By limiting the number of picks, the chances of obtaining multiple target symbols and thereby multiple awards in this embodiment with multiple target sets becomes more difficult. Therefore, a player is challenged to obtain as many target symbols as possible before
30 running out of picks in the bonus game. Such a challenge adds to a player's excitement and enjoyment of the game.

The gaming device then selects and displays a target set including a plurality of symbols as indicated by block

114. In one embodiment, the game displays a plurality of numbers ranging from 0 to 9. While numbers are discussed, it should be appreciated that any symbols are contemplated, including letters A to Z, signs of the Zodiac, months of the year, characters, city names, state names, etc. It is preferred that the symbols are orderly arranged such as in a sequential order in displayed the target set.

The game determines one symbol to be the target symbol in the target set as indicated by block 116. Preferably, the target symbol is randomly determined, however it should be appreciated that a target symbol may be a predetermined symbol in the target set. The target symbol is not displayed to the player until the player picks the target symbol in the target set.

Next, the gaming device prompts the player to select a symbol from the target set as indicated by block 118, which the player believes may be the target symbol in the target set. The prompt may be a statement or message displayed on the display device 30 or 32, or it may be a cursor that flashes and notifies the player to select another symbol. It should be appreciated that the prompt may be any type of prompt initiated by the gaming device 10.

Once the player picks a symbol, the gaming device 10 completes a series of decisions as illustrated by the decision diamonds in the flow diagram of Fig. 14. The processor of the gaming device 10 first determines if the picked symbol is a target symbol as indicated by decision diamond 122. The processor of the gaming device compares the picked symbol to the predetermined target symbol in the target set.

If the picked symbol is the target symbol, the gaming

device highlights the target symbol in some manner to notify the player that the player picked the target symbol in the target set. It should be appreciated that the target symbol may be highlighted by illuminating it, 5 changing the color of the target symbol or by any other desired method. The gaming device then provides the player with an award as indicated by block 126. In the embodiment where there is only one target set in the game, the bonus game ends. In the embodiment where there are 10 several target sets in a bonus game, the processor of the gaming device 10 must determine if the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128b. If there are no picks remaining in the game, the game ends as indicated by oval 130. The player 15 receives the total award for that bonus game.

The player receives an award for each picked target symbol. In one embodiment with multiple target sets, the gaming device provides the player with an award associated with a target symbol. However, it is contemplated that 20 the award value may also be randomly generated by the processor 38. In one embodiment of the present invention, the awards associated with the target symbols are associated with probabilities such that one award has a greater probability of being associated with a target set 25 or symbol than another award.

In another embodiment, the gaming device provides an award to a player based on the order in which the target symbols are picked. In this embodiment, target symbols are preferably numbers and the player's award is the value 30 of the target number itself. When a player picks a target number, the target number is separately displayed on the display device. Any subsequently picked target numbers are displayed in sequential order next to the previously

picked target number or numbers. The player receives the total award designated by the combination of the individual awards from each target symbol. For example, a target set includes the numbers one through nine. A
5 player picks a target number one from a first target set. Then the player picks target number zero from a second target set and target number nine from a third target set. The player's total award for that bonus game is one hundred nine based on the sequential order of the picked
10 target symbols. It should be appreciated that a player may receive the sum of the individual awards or some other suitable award as desired by the game implementor.

If the player has picks remaining in the bonus game, the gaming device 10 displays a new target set with a
15 plurality of symbols to the player as indicated by block 114. The gaming device determines the target symbol and prompts the player to pick a symbol from the target set as indicated by blocks 116 and 118 respectively. The gaming device then repeats the steps described above starting at
20 block 120.

If the player picks a symbol that is not the target symbol, the gaming device 10 must determine whether the player has any picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by decision diamond 128a. If the player has
25 picks remaining, the gaming device determines the relationship between the picked symbol and the target symbol. Once the relationship is determined, the gaming device displays the relationship to the player as indicated by block 124. The gaming device prompts the
30 player to pick another symbol as indicated by block 118. The process described above is repeated until the player picks a target symbol in the target set or the player runs out of picks. If, however, the player does not have any

picks remaining in block 128A, the game ends as indicated by block 130 and the bonus game award total is transferred to the player.

5 Figs. 15A to 15K illustrate an example of one embodiment of the present invention. In this example, the target set symbols are numbers and the player starts out the game with seven picks. Also, the player does not start out with any symbols being revealed or with any type of award as shown by display 106.

10 Referring to Fig. 15A, a display device 30 or 32 including a first target set 100 with a plurality of target symbols or numbers 102a through 102j is illustrated. This embodiment includes a plurality of target sets. The gaming device randomly determines one of
15 the numbers zero through nine to be the target symbol or target number in the first target set. The gaming device selects nine as the target number. The target number is not identified to the player until the player picks the target number in the target set. The gaming device then
20 prompts the player to pick a number from the target set in a suitable manner (not shown) such as using a touch screen or other symbol or number selector connected to the processor. In this game, the player's first pick is the number five designated as 102f from the target set 100.

25 Referring now to Fig. 15B, the number five is highlighted as being the player's first pick. The processor of the gaming device 10 now determines whether the player's first pick is the target number which is nine, or whether the target number is higher or lower than
30 the picked number. In this example, the gaming device compares the first pick 102f to the target number nine. The gaming device 10 determines that the target number is higher than the picked number, five, and therefore

highlights the relationship indicator 108. Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target symbol is higher than the first picked number. The player must pick a symbol that is higher than their first pick so that they have a chance to obtain the target symbol. Also, the pick remaining display 104 now shows that there are six picks remaining in the bonus game.

The player makes their second pick from the group of numbers 102 in target set 100 as illustrated in Fig. 15C. The player picks the number eight, designated as 102i, which is highlighted. The processor of the gaming device determines that the target number nine is still higher than the second pick and therefore highlights the relationship indicator 108 as illuminated in Fig. 15D. Relationship indicator 108 illuminates to notify the player that the target number is higher than the picked number. Because there is only one number higher than the player's last pick, the player will likely obtain the target symbol on their next pick. It should be appreciated that although the next pick appears obvious, the player preferably must make the correct pick of the target number. If by chance, the player picks a different number, the game will continue as described above. In one embodiment of the bonus game, the player will automatically obtain the target number when there is only one possible pick remaining in the target set. In another embodiment, the processor deactivates numbers that were selected by the player and were not the target numbers. In this embodiment, the player eventually obtains the target number when all of the other numbers in the target set, except the target number, are deactivated by the processor. Referring to Fig. 15D, the player has five picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated by the pick

remaining display 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15E, the player picks the first target number. The player picked the number nine which is the target number in the target set 100. Thus, an award, which in this embodiment is a predetermined award value of twenty-five, is displayed in the award display 106. The player still has four picks remaining in the bonus game as indicated in the pick remaining display 104 and therefore continues to play the bonus game. It should thus be appreciated that in this embodiment, the number of picks the player uses for each target set will determine the number of picks available to the player for subsequent target sets.

In Fig. 15F, the player is now trying to match a second target number in a new target set 100a. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number four (102d) from the second target set. As illustrated, the picked numbers that were highlighted previously, are not highlighted anymore because the player is attempting to obtain a new target number in a new target set 100.

Here, the player picks the number six designated as 102g, from the group of numbers 102 in the second target set 100 as illustrated in Fig 15F. The processor of the gaming device 10 determines whether this pick is the target number or if the target number is higher or lower than the picked number. In this case, as shown in Fig. 15G, the target number four is lower than the picked number. Thus, the target number indicator 110 is illuminated, which notifies the player that the target number is lower than the picked number. On the next pick, the player must pick a lower number than their first pick in this target set to obtain the target number. After

this pick, the player has only three picks remaining as indicated by the pick remaining display 104.

In Fig. 15H, the player makes their second pick in the target set and the sixth pick overall in the bonus game. The player picks the number three designated as 102d. This pick is lower than their previous pick of six that is highlighted. However, as Fig. 15I illustrates, this pick is still not the target number. The processor of the gaming device 10 determines that the target number four is higher than the player's second pick, three, and notifies the player by illuminating the target symbol indicator 108. The player now must pick either the four (102e) or five (102f) with their next pick. The player has only two picks remaining as shown in the pick display 104.

Referring now to Fig. 15J, the player picks the target number from the second target set 100a. The player picked the number four (102e), which is the target number. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five to the player. The award of twenty-five is added to the player's previous award of twenty-five to give a total award for the bonus game of fifty. The pick remaining display 104 now shows that the player has only one pick remaining in this game to obtain another target number.

In Fig. 15K, the player makes a first pick in the third target set 100b. The gaming device determines the target number to be the number five (102f). Although this is the player's first pick in the new target set, it is the player's seventh and final pick in the bonus game. The player picks the number five (102f) from the third target set. Fortunately for the player, the player picked the target number in the third target set on their first pick. The gaming device provides an award of twenty-five

to the player for picking the target number. The player now has a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game. Since this is the final pick, the player receives a total award of seventy-five for the bonus game as indicated by the award display 106. If the player did not pick the target number with the player's final pick, the player may not obtain an award for the third target set 100b. It should be appreciated that the award associated with each subsequent target set or target number increases in one embodiment.

Referring now to Fig. 16, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the award or combined award equals a combination of target symbols. The symbols in this embodiment are preferably numbers. However, it should be appreciated that the symbols can be any suitable symbols desired by the game implementor. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides an award for the combination of each picked target number. The award or combined award is the order of the target numbers. Once the target number is picked, the target number is transferred to the award combination 112. The award combination preferably includes three award locations 114 including a first award location 114a, a second award location 114b and a third award location 114c. It should be appreciated that an award combination can include any suitable number of award locations as desired.

In this illustration, the player picked the first target number, which was the number one (102b). The number one, therefore, is transferred to the first award location 114a. The player then picked the target number five (102f) from the second target set. This target number is placed in the second award location 114b in the award combination 112. If the player ran out of picks at

this point in the bonus game, the player would receive the award indicated by the award combination. The award would be the value represented by the first and second target numbers in award locations 114a and 114b, which is
5 fifteen. This is a relatively low bonus award because the first number is a low number. Because of such possibility, the game implementor may want to weight higher numbers in the target set to be randomly selected for the first target set to increase the award to the
10 player in such cases. Alternatively, if the award is below a pre-determined threshold, the processor may cause a replay of the game to provide a sufficient award to the player. Alternatively, the number may be used as a non-credit value such as a multiplier, number of free spins or
15 number of free games.

In the third target set, the player picked the third target number, which was two. The target number two is transferred to the third and final award location 114c in the award combination 112. In this embodiment, the bonus
20 game ends when the player completes the award combination or runs out of picks. Here, the player completed the award combination 112. The player receives the total award indicated by the award combination 112, which is one hundred fifty-two. This award is displayed in the award
25 display 108.

In one aspect of this embodiment, the player may receive an additional award (not shown) for completing the award combination 112. The additional award may be a predetermined award, a random award or any type of award
30 desired. In another aspect of this embodiment, each subsequent target set is larger in size, or includes more symbols or numbers. By increasing the target set size, the level of difficulty of obtaining the target numbers in

each subsequent target set increases. For example, in a game with three target sets, the first target set includes five numbers, the second target set includes seven numbers and the third target set includes ten numbers. It should
5 also be appreciated that the target set size could decrease or could be randomly determined.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device provides additional awards to a player for having picks remaining at the end of a bonus game.
10 Preferably, the gaming device provides an award for each remaining pick. In another aspect of this embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game for having
15 picks remaining in the game. The player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain larger awards. In a further aspect of this embodiment, the gaming device displays several masked or hidden selections to the player (not shown). The player
20 picks a selection with each remaining pick from the bonus game. Each selection provides an additional award to the player. The additional award may be any type of award desired by the game implementor.

Referring now to Fig. 17, the display device 30 or 32
25 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the target set 200 includes symbols 202 designated as 202a to 202f. The symbols 202 are letters in the alphabet and are arranged in a vertical configuration. The gaming device provides a predetermined
30 award associated with each target letter. The award can also be based on the total number of target letters obtained by a player in the bonus game. The relationship indicators are represented by an up arrow 206 and a down

arrow 208. Relationship indicator 206 is highlighted or illuminated if a target letter is higher than or above a picked symbol. If the target letter is lower than or below a picked symbol then the down arrow 208 is highlighted. If a player obtains a target letter in the target set 100, the target letter is transferred to the award combination 204. The award combination includes one or more award locations. In this illustration, the award combination has four award locations 204a to 204d. The first award location 204a represents the first target letter obtained by the player, the second award location 204b represents the second target letter obtained by the player, and so forth. In this illustration, the player obtained all four of the target letters in the award combination 204. Each target letter represents an award determined by the game implementor. This embodiment also has an award display 210 that indicates the accumulated award provided to the player during the bonus game. It also includes a pick remaining display 212 that indicates the number of picks remaining in the bonus game.

Referring now to Fig. 18, a further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device provides the player with a number of picks at the beginning of the bonus game. The number of picks such as four is displayed to the player by the picks remaining display 304. The gaming device also displays a masked target combination 312 having one or more masked target numbers 313. The player picks a number 302a to 302j from the target set 300 until the player picks a target number. The target number indicators 308 and 310 indicate whether the selected number is higher or lower than the target number.

In Fig. 18, the target combination includes three masked target numbers "2," "1" and "8" (shown in phantom). The processor forms the target combination 312 by randomly selecting and placing the target numbers 313 in the target combination from a plurality of target numbers (not shown) based on the order that the target numbers are selected. It should be appreciated that the target combination may include target symbols or other characters as desired by the game implementor. It should also be appreciated that the order that the target numbers are placed in the target combination can be any suitable order. Additionally, the target combination may be predetermined by the processor. Each picked target number in a target set is a digit in the target combination.

15 If the player picks all of the target numbers or digits in the combination, the gaming device preferably provides an award (not shown) to the player. The award is preferably based on the number of picks that the player has remaining in the bonus game. In one embodiment, the player uses their remaining picks to select additional awards or prizes. In another embodiment, the player is provided with another bonus level or bonus game and the player uses their remaining picks in that bonus level or bonus game to obtain additional awards.

25 In another embodiment, the award provided to the player for picking all of the target numbers or symbols in the target combination is based on the number of picks that the player actually uses to obtain the target combination. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides a larger award to the player for using less picks to obtain the target combination. It should also be appreciated that the player may also obtain an additional award or larger award for obtaining the target number or

symbol in a target set based on the number of picks used by the player.

In an alternative embodiment, the number of picks provided to the player is not displayed to the player. In
5 this embodiment, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the bonus game increases because the player does not know when their picks will run out and therefore, when the game will end.

While the present invention has been described in
10 connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements
15 included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by
20 the scope of the claims.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming device comprising:
 - a plurality of first selections including at least one
 - 5 trigger selection;
 - a plurality of second selections;
 - at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
 - a number of picks associated with said first and second
 - 10 selections;
 - a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
 - a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
 - 15 until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for
 - 20 each pick by the player from the second selections, and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.
- 25 2. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.
3. The gaming device of Claim 1 or 2, wherein the plurality of awards includes at least one relatively large
- 30 award and a plurality of relatively small awards.
4. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which

includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the first selections.

5. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the first selections.

6. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

7. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

8. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein at least one award is associated with each of the second selections.

9. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional award associated with the first selections.

10. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the number of picks is predetermined.

11. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the number of picks is randomly determined.

12. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks prior to picking the trigger

selection.

13. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when
5 the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

14. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

10 15. The gaming device of any of Claims 1 to 13, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

16. The gaming device of Claim 15, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member
15 which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

17. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

20

18. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

25 19. The gaming device of any preceding Claim, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

20. A gaming device comprising:
30 a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;

at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second selections, wherein the number of picks is greater than
5 the number of first selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection,
10 reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections, and provides any
15 awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

21. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

20

22. The gaming device of Claim 20, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

23. The gaming device of Claim 22, wherein the mechanical
25 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

24. The gaming device of Claim 22 or 23, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or
30 more trigger symbols.

25. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 24, wherein

the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

26. The gaming device of any of Claims 20 to 25, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

27. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with the first and second selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks one of the trigger selections or until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first selections, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks any of the trigger selections and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the second selections and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

28. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

29. The gaming device of Claim 27, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

30. The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the mechanical
5 display includes at least one movable revealing member
which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

31. The gaming device of Claim 29 or 30, wherein the
first selections are mechanical reels that include one or
10 more trigger symbols.

32. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 31, wherein
the number of picks is greater than the number of first
selections.

15 33. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 32, wherein
the second selections replace the first selections on the
display device.

20 34. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 33, which
includes a consolation award provided to the player when
the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger
selection.

25 35. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 34, which
includes a consolation award provided to the player when
the player picks one of the trigger selections with the
last pick.

30 36. The gaming device of any of Claims 27 to 35, which
includes at least one additional pick provided to the
player for the second selections.

37. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including a plurality of
trigger selections;
a plurality of second selections associated with each of
5 the trigger selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick the first
selections until the player picks one of the trigger
selections or until these are no picks remaining, reduces
15 the number of picks for each pick by the player from the
first selections, enables the player to pick second
selections associated with said trigger selection picked
by the player if there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
20 second selections and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
until there are no picks remaining.

38. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
25 device is a touch screen.

39. The gaming device of Claim 37, wherein the display
device is a mechanical display.

30 40. The gaming device of Claim 39, wherein the mechanical
display includes at least one movable revealing member
which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

41. The gaming device of Claim 39 or 40, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

5 42. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 41, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

43. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 42, wherein
10 the awards associated with each of the plurality of second selections are different.

44. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 43, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the
15 display device.

45. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 44, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking one of the
20 trigger selections.

46. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 45, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.
25

47. The gaming device of any of Claims 37 to 46, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

30 48. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one trigger selection;

a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the first and second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
5 selections;
at least one additional pick associated with one of the first or second selections;
a plurality of awards associated with the second selections; and
10 a processor which enables a player to pick the first selections until the player picks the trigger selection or until there are no picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by the player from the first
15 selections, provides at least one additional pick when the player picks one of the first selections having at least one additional pick associated with said first selection, enables the player to pick the second selections when the player picks the trigger selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the second selections, provides at least one additional pick when the player picks one of the second selections having at least one additional pick associated with said second selection, and provides any awards to the player associated with the second selections
25 picked by the player until there are no picks remaining.

49. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

30 50. The gaming device of Claim 48, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

51. The gaming device of Claim 50, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.
- 5 52. The gaming device of Claim 50 or 51, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.
53. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 52, wherein
10 the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.
54. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 53, wherein at least one of the additional picks is associated with a
15 bonus symbol.
55. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 54, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.
20
56. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 55, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.
25
57. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 56, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.
- 30 58. The gaming device of any of Claims 48 to 57, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

59. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of first selections including at least one
trigger selection;
a plurality of second selections;
5 at least one display device which displays the first and
second selections;
a number of picks associated with said first and second
selections;
at least one relationship indicator which identifies the
10 relationship between the trigger selection and each
selection picked by a player;
a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables the player to pick the first
15 selections until the player picks the trigger selection or
until there are no picks remaining, activates the
relationship indicator to identify the relationship
between the trigger selection and the selection picked by
the player reduces the number of picks for each pick by
20 the player from the first selections, enables the player
to pick second selections when the player picks the target
selection and there are picks remaining, reduces the
number of picks for each pick by the player from the
second selections and provides any awards associated with
25 the second selections picked by the player until there are
no picks remaining.

60. The gaming device of Claim 59, wherein the number of
picks is greater than the number of first selections.

30

61. The gaming device of Claim 59 or 60, which includes a
selector for enabling the player to activate the

relationship indicator.

62. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 61, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

5

63. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 62, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

64. The gaming device of Claim 63, wherein the mechanical
10 display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals each of the first selections.

65. The gaming device of Claim 64, wherein the first
15 selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

66. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 65, wherein the second selections replace the first selections on the display device.

20

67. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 66, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player runs out of picks before picking the trigger selection.

25

68. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 67, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player picks the trigger selection with the last pick.

30

69. The gaming device of any of Claims 59 to 68, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

70. A gaming device comprising:
a plurality of sets including first selections;
at least one trigger selection included in each of said
sets;
5 a plurality of second selections;
at least one display device which displays the sets of
first selections and the second selections;
a number of picks associated with each of the sets and the
second selections;
10 a plurality of awards associated with the second
selections; and
a processor which enables a player to pick first
selections in each of the sets until the player picks the
trigger selection in the sets or until there are no picks
15 remaining to pick first selections in the sets, reduces
the number of picks associated with each set for each
first selection picked by the player in those sets,
enables the player to pick the second selections when the
player picks at least one trigger selection, provides a
20 total number of picks to the player based on the sum of
the picks remaining for each set, reduces the total number
of picks for each pick by the player from the second
selections, and provides any awards to the player
associated with the second selections picked by the player
25 until there are no picks remaining.

71. The gaming device of Claim 70, wherein the number of
picks associated with each set is greater than the number
of first selections in said sets.

30

72. The gaming device of Claim 70 or 71, which includes
at least one additional pick associated with one of the

first selections in each of the sets.

73. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 72, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the first selections in each of the sets.

74. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 73, which includes at least one additional pick associated with one of the second selections.

10

75. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 74, which includes at least one multiplier associated with one of the second selections.

15 76. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 75, which includes a consolation award provided to the player when the player does not pick any of the trigger selections in the sets before running out of picks for said sets.

20 77. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 76, which includes at least one additional pick associated with each of the trigger selections in the sets.

78. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 77, which includes at least one additional pick provided to the player for the second selections.

79. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a touch screen.

30

80. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 78, wherein the display device is a mechanical display.

81. The gaming device of Claim 80, wherein the mechanical display includes at least one movable revealing member which covers and reveals the first selections in each of the sets.

5

82. The gaming device of Claim 80 or 81, wherein the first selections are mechanical reels that include one or more trigger symbols.

10 83. The gaming device of any of Claims 70 to 82, wherein the second selections replace the sets of first selections on the display device.

84. A method of operating a gaming device, the method
15 comprising the steps of:

- (a) displaying a plurality of first selections including a trigger selection to a player;
- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
20 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) displaying a plurality of second selections to the player when the player picks the trigger selection wherein
25 the second selections are associated with awards;
- (f) repeating steps (g) to (i) until there are no picks remaining;
- (g) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (h) reducing the number of picks for each second
30 selection picked by the player; and
- (i) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player.

85. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second selections are displayed on a touch screen.

86. The method of Claim 84, wherein the first and second
5 selections are displayed on a mechanical display.

87. The method of any of Claims 84 to 86, wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections.

10

88. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the number of picks is reduced by a predetermined amount.

89. The method of any of Claims 84 to 87, wherein the
15 number of picks is reduced by a random amount.

90. The method of any of Claims 84 to 89, wherein the awards include a plurality of relatively small awards and at least one relatively large award.

20

91. The method of any of Claims 84 to 90, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player picks the trigger selection with the final pick.

25

92. The method of any of Claims 84 to 91, which includes the step of providing a consolation award to the player if the player does not pick the trigger selection before running out of picks.

30

93. The method of any of Claims 84 to 92, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the

player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

94. The method of any of Claims 84 to 93, which includes
5 the step of providing at least one multiplier to the player when the player picks one of the first or second selections.

95. The method of any of Claims 84 to 94, wherein the
10 first selections include a plurality of trigger selections.

96. The gaming device of any of Claims 84 to 95, wherein
the second selections replace the first selections.
15

97. The method of any of Claims 84 to 96, wherein the steps (a) to (i) are provided to the player through a data network.

20 98. The method of Claim 97, wherein the data network is an internet.

99. The method of any of Claims 84 to 98, which includes the step of providing at least one additional pick to the
25 player for the second selections.

100. A method of operating a gaming device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a plurality of first selections including
30 at least one trigger selection and a plurality of second selections to a player, wherein a plurality of awards are associated with the second selections;

- (b) displaying a number of picks to the player wherein the number of picks is greater than the number of first selections;
- (c) enabling the player to pick the first selections
- 5 until the player picks the trigger selection;
- (d) reducing the number of picks for each first selection picked by the player;
- (e) enabling the player to pick the second selections;
- (f) reducing the number of picks for each second
- 10 selection picked by the player;
- (g) providing any award to the player for each second selection picked by the player; and
- (h) repeating steps (e) to (g) until there are no picks remaining.

Application No: GB 0302849.5
Claims searched: 1-19, 27-69 and 84-99

Examiner: Stuart Purdy
Date of search: 24 June 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance	
XE	1, 27, 48, and 84 at least	EP 1298607 A2	(IGT) see figure 7, column 11 line 19, column 11 line 20-22, and column 11 line 49-column 12 line 12;
XP	1, 27, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 6439995 B1	(HUGHES-BAIRD) see column 2 lines 54-56, and column 7 lines 1-8
XP	1, 48, 59, and 84 at least	US 2003/0027616 A1	(VANCURA) see page 3 paragraph 29.

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The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

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